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THE HISTORY OF ENGLAND
FROM THE YEAR 1830—1874.

FROM THE RIGHT HON. JOHN BRIGHT'S SPEECH AT
BIRMINGHAM.

"It is a great misfortune that the history of our country that is nearest our own times young men are least acquainted with. It is not written in histories that were read at school, and they are not old enough, as I am old enough, to remember almost every political fact since the great Reform Bill of 1832. I wish young men would read some history of this period. A neighbour and a friend of mine, a most intelligent and accomplished clergyman—Mr. Molesworth—has published a work, being a political history of England from the year 1830—that is from the first Reform Bill—until within the last two or three years. a book honestly written, in which facts are plainly—and I believe truly—stated, and a work which would give great information to all the young men of the country, if they could be prevailed upon to read it "

THE
HISTORY OF ENGLAND
FROM THE YEAR 1830—1874.

BY
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HISTORY OF ENGLAND, ETC.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

I PROPOSE to write the history of England during the forty-four years over which my memory ranges. I shall not attempt to write a history of the British Empire or of the British Isles, but simply of England, and, therefore, I shall not refer to Scotch, Irish, Colonial, or Foreign affairs except so far as they seem to me to have appreciably accelerated, retarded, or modified the course of events in England. I choose as my point of departure the Reform Bill of 1832, which introduced an era of long and successful struggle for the fair representation of the people of England in the House of Commons, and against that class legislation which was the natural and almost necessary consequence of the abuses which had previously existed.

Many of the grievances of which the reformers complained were not of modern growth. Many of them were as old as our representative system. Some had from time to time been corrected, but others had grown up in the place of those which had been thus extinguished. In the earlier period of our parliamentary history there was no fixed rule for the selection of towns represented in the Lower House. The king issued his writ to such as he chose to select—being usually, though not invariably, guided in his choice by their importance and population ; and as the House

of Commons was not then an object of jealousy to the crown, but on the contrary, often a useful ally to the sovereign in his contests with his turbulent barons, there was no motive for an improper exercise of this power, and little danger that it would be seriously abused. When, however, the House of Commons began to be recognised as a great estate of the realm, it was justly felt that bounds ought to be set to the arbitrary discretion of the sovereign; and he readily relinquished a prerogative from the exercise of which he derived little or no advantage. Thus, by the tacit consent of all parties, this power of the crown was gradually disused. Unfortunately, it was not formally transferred to the legislature or the House of Commons, but so left that any step taken by parliament would be regarded as an usurpation of the prerogative of the crown, and any attempt made by the crown to revive its dormant rights would arouse in the Commons a not unreasonable jealousy. A useful discretionary power which needed regulation was practically annulled. Towns which had grown into importance were unrepresented, while others which had almost or altogether disappeared from the face of the earth still continued to send members to the House of Commons. Thus a distribution of representation, which had been originally made with tolerable fairness, had, as early as the reign of Charles I., become so evidently inequitable as to attract the attention of the Long Parliament, which increased the number of members returned by the counties and the metropolis, gave representatives to the towns of Manchester, Leeds, and Halifax—then rising into importance,—disfranchised many decayed boroughs, and gave votes to all owners of land whatever the nature of their tenure might be. It also gave representatives to Scotland and Ireland. The Civil War prevented these changes from being carried out, but Cromwell adopted the plan thus proposed in summoning the parliament of 1654, and Clarendon, in his history of the Great Rebellion, admits that “it was not thought an ill-temperament, and was then generally looked upon as an alteration fit to be more warrantably made and at a better time.” The Protector’s proceedings in this matter were accepted without opposition by a parliament not disposed to look very favourably on his measures. But the reaction which followed the Restoration, prejudiced men’s minds against all changes of which Cromwell and the Long Parliament were the authors, and the question of Parliamentary Reform suffered a long eclipse, from which it emerged in 1745, when parliament was assembled in October on account of the rebellion in Scotland. On that occasion the following amendment to the address was proposed by Sir Francis Dashwood,

afterwards Lord Despencer "That for the firmer establishment of his majesty's throne on the solid basis of his people's affections, it should be our speedy care to frame such bills as may effectually secure to his majesty's subjects the perpetual enjoyment of their undoubted right to be freely and fairly represented in parliaments frequently chosen, and exempted from influence of every kind" This amendment was negatived without a division.

Foremost among its opponents was the elder Pitt, afterwards Earl of Chatham, who then vehemently denounced it as ill timed, though he afterwards used language strongly condemnatory of the abuses against which Sir Francis Dashwood's amendment was levied. His celebrated son, William Pitt, moved for a select committee on parliamentary reform in 1782, and, in the following year, brought forward a specific plan contained in three resolutions, of which the first pledged the House to measures against bribery, the second proposed to disfranchise corrupt boroughs, the third proposed to give additional representatives to counties and to the metropolis. The resolutions were rejected by a majority of 144.

The largeness of this majority did not discourage him from renewing, in the year 1785, the attempt to amend the representation. Being then prime minister, he proposed to purchase the right of sending members to parliament from thirty-six boroughs of small population, to transfer the seats thus acquired to counties or populous towns, and to establish a permanent provision for the extinction of decayed boroughs. But this scheme, although introduced by a minister who carried most of his measures by triumphant majorities, was negatived by 248 votes to 174—a result which threw great suspicion on the sincerity of his desire for the reform he advocated. The numbers certainly seemed to show that he had not put forth any great exertions to secure votes, and it is not improbable that abuses which he disapproved while they helped to maintain the ascendancy of a hostile administration, seemed to him less objectionable when they propped up his own government. At all events, he henceforth became the vehement opponent of the reforms he had hitherto advocated, instituted prosecutions against men whose only crime was that they retained the opinions which he had abandoned, and used language little, if at all, more violent than that which he had formerly employed. The French Revolution, while it terrified many of the aristocratic friends of reform, encouraged others to renewed exertions in advocating a cause akin to that which seemed to be triumphing on the other side of the channel. Mr. Grey, who had taken up the standard which Mr. Pitt had cast

away, was sustained by extraordinary demonstrations of popular sympathy and support. Petitions, strongly worded and numerous signed, from most of the chief towns of the empire, were entrusted to him. One of them, which obtained and deserved great attention because it gave a very full, clear, and temperate statement of the abuses and grievances of which the petitioners complained, was from "the friends of the people"* In presenting it, Mr. Grey referred to one portion of it in which the petitioners offered to prove that upwards of 97 members were actually nominated, and 70 more indirectly appointed, by peers and the Treasury, and that 91 commoners procured the election of 133, so that 306 members—that is, an absolute majority of the House of Commons—were returned by 160 persons. Mr. Grey said, "I assert that this is the condition of England: if you say it is *not*, do justice to yourselves by calling on us for the proof, and expose your calumniators to reproach; but if it be the condition of England, shall it not be redressed?" An overwhelming majority of the House of Commons, led by Mr. Pitt, gave the most decisive testimony to the truth of Mr. Grey's statements by refusing to accept the challenge thus given. The excesses of the French Revolution, and the war with France which followed it, threw the question back by many years. It was, indeed, raised again in the House of Commons by Mr. Grey in 1795 and 1797, but with diminished support in the country and larger hostile majorities in parliament. Persecuted by the government and odious to the mob, the reformers of that generation were silenced, and the question did not again emerge until after the conclusion of the peace which followed the battle of Waterloo.

This peace brought with it but little alleviation of the distress which the war had produced. Indeed, it had been preceded by a measure calculated to deprive the people of their proper share of the benefits which ought to have attended it. The landed interest had profited greatly by the war; they had enjoyed a monopoly, which caused a great rise in the profits of the farmer and the rent of the landlord. The peace which followed the first overthrow of Buonaparte put an end to this monopoly, and the consequence was an immediate fall in rents and profits, attended by great agricultural distress. The monopoly had caused a great extension of agricultural operations; the cessation of the monopoly produced a collapse. Instead, however, of accepting this necessity, and en-

* This petition, which is well worthy of the attention of any one who would understand the state of things that the Reform Bill dealt with, is to be found in the Appendix of my history of that bill.

endeavouring to accommodate themselves to it, the dominant landed interest made the prevalent distress a pretext for protecting, as it was termed, British agriculture, by duties on the importation of foreign corn. And thus, in the interval which preceded the last paroxysm of our struggle with France, was begun that policy of "protection" once so strenuously upheld, and now so universally condemned.

This law relieved the agricultural interest at the expense of almost every other interest in the nation; and those who suffered from it were not slow in discovering the cause of their distresses. In the north of England, where the manufacturing interest was already strong, the discontent was great and general; but it was felt to be useless to attack the obnoxious measure as long as the government of the country was entirely in the hands of those at whose instigation and for whose supposed advantage it was adopted, and therefore the old cry of parliamentary reform began to be uttered more and more loudly; and the expedients which were adopted by the suffering classes to make their wishes and wants known soon excited considerable attention and no little alarm.

In the year 1819, Sir Francis Burdett moved that the House of Commons should take the subject of the representation into its consideration early in the next session, but the motion was rejected by a large majority. Out of doors, however, the excitement and agitation continued to increase, and to alarm the government, which made no attempt to alleviate the distresses of the people, or to convert their disaffection into loyalty by wise legislation. The only remedies they thought of applying to the disorders that prevailed were strong measures of repression, serving only to increase the sufferings and exasperate the discontent of the people. On the 7th of July, a circular letter was issued by the Secretary of the Home Department to the Lords-Lieutenants of the "disturbed" counties recommending them to take prompt and effectual measures for the preservation of the public tranquillity, to exhort the magistrates to a vigilant discharge of their duty, and to give directions to the yeomanry to hold themselves in readiness if their services should be required.

The persons to whom this circular was sent fully showed the alarms of the government, and were but too ready to adopt the measures it indicated. The reformers, on the other hand, rather exasperated than alarmed, continued their agitation. Great assemblies were held in Birmingham, Leeds, and other large towns, and a meeting was appointed to be held at Manchester on the 16th

of August, which was regarded both by the friends and foes of reform as an event of great importance. The minds of the magistrates were filled with exaggerated apprehensions, which they communicated to the government; and, on the other hand, the reformers made great exertions to render the demonstration imposing, and multitudes were drawn to the spot by the expectation of some attempt on the part of the authorities to prevent the meeting from being held.

Such were the dispositions on both sides on the morning of the day appointed for the holding of the great meeting. From all the surrounding towns and villages clubs came in, many of them marching in military array to the place of meeting—a large field near St. Peter's Church, then on the outside of the town, but now in its very heart. On that spot stands the Free-Trade Hall, appropriately commemorating the peaceful triumph of a struggle of which its site witnessed the bloody and turbulent commencement. For though the reform of Parliament was the means, cheap bread, through the repeal of the Corn-laws, was one of the principal ends which the persons attending this meeting proposed to themselves. Most of the clubs carried flags, and some of them were preceded by bands of music. Every little circumstance that could serve to inflame the fears of those who dreaded reform were carefully noted. It was observed that one of these bodies marched in military style, tuning their steps to the sound of a bugle. Another was preceded by a standard bearing the motto of William Wallace, "God armeth the patriot." Other devices inscribed on their banners were—"Annual Parliaments," "Universal Suffrage," "Vote by Ballot." Among the clubs were two composed of female reformers, one of which numbered 150 members. Many other females accompanied their friends to the ground. Altogether it was computed that at least 80,000 were present; and when we consider the great population which even then inhabited the districts around Manchester, the feeling in favour of reform that pervaded the bulk of that population, and the importance attached by both sides to this meeting, we can hardly think this estimate excessive. Had this multitude really entertained the designs imputed to them by the anti-reformers, they might unquestionably have annihilated the handful of soldiers, most of them very ill-disciplined, and of special constables, who were at the disposal of the magistracy, and might have wreaked on Manchester, or on the portion of its inhabitants that were obnoxious to their displeasure, any mischief they might have contemplated. But they harboured no such intentions. They had come to display their force,

not to exert it; and if they had been permitted to carry out their proceedings without molestation, they would have returned to their respective homes without molesting any one. But the insolence and fears of the authorities prevented this happy result. Before the commencement of the meeting a body of special constables took up their position on the field, and the multitude opened to afford them a passage. Mr. Hunt did not reach the ground until some time after the hour fixed for the commencement of the meeting; he was received with enthusiastic shouts, and called to the chair by acclamation. He had not proceeded far with his opening address when the yeomanry made their appearance and advanced at a brisk trot, creating great consternation in that part of the crowd which was nearest to them. They halted for a moment to re-form their ranks, which had been thrown into disorder by the rapid movement. No sooner had they recovered themselves than they drew their swords, which they flourished in a threatening manner. The multitude replied to this demonstration with three cheers. Meanwhile the Riot Act had been read, but in such a manner that the meeting does not appear to have heard it, nor were they then or afterwards commanded to disperse. As soon as tranquillity was in some degree restored, Mr. Hunt resumed his speech, which the arrival of yeomanry had interrupted. While he was telling his hearers that the appearance of the yeomanry on the ground was only a trick to disturb the meeting, they, without regarding the danger to which they exposed the crowd, rode forward to the wagon which served as a platform, and their commanding officer called on Hunt to surrender. Hunt coolly replied that he was ready to give himself up to any civil officer who would produce a warrant for his apprehension, and exhorted the people to behave peaceably, and not to attempt any resistance; advice which, notwithstanding the irritating and ill-advised conduct of the authorities, was followed. Hunt then gave himself up. Flushed with this success, the yeomanry then raised the cry of "Have at the flags!" and charged those nearest who attempted to escape; but the human mass behind them rendered retreat impossible, forming a living wall at which the yeomanry rode, cutting their helpless and unresisting victims with their swords, or trampling them under the feet of their horses. At length the crowd broke and fled in all directions. A few of those who remained, in their natural indignation at this cruel and cowardly attack, flung stones and bricks at their assailants, without, however, inflicting any serious injury. Altogether, between three and four hundred persons were cut or otherwise wounded

Hunt was conveyed to prison, amidst the threats and insults of the yeomanry and special constables, and his life was in imminent danger from his excited captors. This *massacre*, as it was termed at the time, greatly embittered the minds of the working-classes, and produced a feeling of hostility towards superiors in wealth and station, which worked much mischief for many years after. The affair was never properly investigated, and it is impossible to say whether the magistrates or the yeomanry were most guilty; but there can be no doubt that both were highly blameworthy. It was an act of reckless inhumanity to choose such a moment for the arrest of Hunt and his associates. It was still more improper to use for such a service a body of ill-disciplined yeomanry, when regular troops were at hand. The latter acted with mingled coolness and firmness, and inflicted no injury whatever on the crowd. Had they been employed to make the arrest, the meeting might have been dispersed, not perhaps without complaint, but without bloodshed, and without engendering that feeling of burning indignation which the conduct of the yeomanry excited, and which rankled in the minds of the working-classes for more than twenty years after the occurrence of the event that provoked it.

The effect of these events was to increase the prevailing alarm and exasperation. The government introduced into the legislature, and carried by large majorities, an array of bills empowering them to seize arms, suppress drilling, punish seditious libels, and employ other measures of coercion; on the other hand, they and their supporters in parliament voted down every motion for inquiry into the distress of the people, and every attempt to obtain some small instalment of parliamentary reform. Still the reform agitation was not dead. The political atmosphere was charged with electricity, which, though not seen, was felt. Everywhere there was an uneasy sensation of dread and distrust, like the feeling which precedes a storm. Ministry after ministry had fallen, apparently without any adequate cause. At length, in 1827, the king, George IV., induced the Duke of Wellington to become Prime Minister. His practical good sense, distinguished services, and great military renown, gave strength and prestige to his administration, which was led in the Lower House by Mr. Peel, an excellent administrator, a skilful debater, and, perhaps, the only man in the House of Commons capable of leading that assembly in conjunction with the duke, who, unfortunately for the stability and permanence of his administration, brought to the cabinet the habits of command he had acquired in the camp, and exacted from his colleagues the same

unreasoning obedience that he had been accustomed to meet with in his military subalterns. Mr. Peel was the real head of the government, because the duke felt that he could not take a step without his aid and guidance. In some few matters more immediately within his own sphere as premier, the duke acted on his own opinion, and it was in acting thus that he took a step which led to the breaking up of his own administration, and of that strong party which had hitherto defeated every proposal for the reform of parliament.

The duke had admitted into his cabinet several followers of Mr. Canning, the chief of whom was Mr. Huskisson, a man who was a good debater and who enjoyed a high reputation in the House and in the country as a financier and a political economist. The borough of East Retford had been convicted of gross corruption, and the House had to determine in what manner the seats of which it was deprived for this offence should be disposed of. Some urged that they should be transferred to the hundred in which East Retford was situated; others, that they should be given to the town of Birmingham. The duke and the majority of the government supported the former of these proposals, Mr. Huskisson voted for the latter. Immediately after doing so he wrote a note to the duke, in which he explained the grounds of his vote and offered to withdraw from the ministry if his explanation should be deemed not satisfactory. The duke treated this note as a resignation, and at once obtained the king's acceptance of it. The removal of Mr. Huskisson from the ministry in this manner made a very unfavourable impression in the House of Commons and in the country; and this feeling was aggravated when it was announced that Sir G. Murray, a military man, was chosen to succeed him.

At the moment when these events were occurring, the state of Ireland was such as to cause great and well-grounded alarm. The overwhelming majority of the Irish were Roman Catholics, but the whole political power was monopolized by the Protestant minority. Mr. Pitt and most of his successors in office had been anxious to alter this state of things, but were unable to overcome the scruples of George III. and George IV., who considered themselves bound by the coronation oath to resist the removal of the Catholic disabilities, as they were termed; and the latter of whom had exacted a promise, from some of those whom he had summoned to form a government, that the subject should not be mentioned during their administration. No such pledge had, however, been enacted from the duke, because he shared and zealously upheld the opinions of

this sovereign. Mr. Peel was, if possible, still more strongly pledged against the repeal of the Catholic disabilities; and so, too, were most of the other members of the government.

The Irish Catholics had not been idle. A "Catholic Association" was at the head of one of the most formidable agitations that had ever been carried on in any country. The malcontents wore uniforms, had a military organization, increased daily in numbers, in boldness and in violence. The police shared the prevalent discontent. The Irish Catholic soldiers, who formed a considerable part of the British army, had been tampered with, and could not be relied on in case of an insurrection.

The leader of this formidable agitation was a man well calculated to bring it to a successful termination. Daniel O'Connell possessed a varied and persuasive eloquence, of a kind admirably adapted to stir the passions of that generous and excitable race who had chosen him for their champion. At one moment he addressed them in terms of the most winning *bouhomie*, at another he denounced the tyranny of their Saxon oppressors, and proclaimed the wrongs of his country in accents of the most withering indignation. He possessed a rare mixture of caution and audacity; and his legal education—for he was a barrister—enabled him to approach the very verge of treason without bringing himself within the grasp of the law. He possessed in an eminent degree all the wit, humour, and readiness for which his countrymen have always been remarkable. His versatile genius enabled him with equal ease and success to negotiate with the lord-lieutenant and his government, and to guide the turbulent and impulsive spirits at whose head he was placed, and whose deliverance he had undertaken to achieve. Most men, if placed in a similar position, would have been unable to ride the storm they had conjured up, and would have become its victims; but so great was the ascendancy that O'Connell had acquired over the lower orders of his fellow-countrymen, and so unbounded the confidence they reposed in him, that he was able to goad them almost to madness, and then, if it suited the purpose of the moment, to restrain them in the wildest transports of their fury. In a word, he wielded the wild and excitable millions of the Catholic population with an ease that seemed almost magical. Having it in his power to throw them into instant rebellion, he took care that they should exhibit just violence enough to terrify their opponents without breaking out into open insurrection or coming into collision with the force of the British empire. The embarrassment which this state of things had

caused to the British government was thus correctly described by Mr. Peel, when he subsequently introduced a measure for its removal :—

“For thirty-five years the state of government in this country on the Catholic question has been disunion. Lord Fitzwilliam went to Ireland in 1794, and his government came to a termination on account of a difference about the Catholic question. In 1801, Mr Pitt's government came to an end, and on the same ground—a difference about the Catholic question. He resumed the government in 1804, composing his cabinet in a manner which showed that it was not formed on the principle of unqualified resistance. After his death succeeded a new ministry, which endured about eighteen months, and then came to a termination—still on the same ground, a difference about the Catholic question. It is true that during the five years that followed, under the ministry of Mr. Perceval, government resisted the consideration of this question; but the resistance did not proceed on permanent grounds, for during the greater part of that interval Lord Castlereagh and Mr. Canning were members of the government, and consented to act only in deference to the conscientious scruples of his late majesty. So soon as the restrictions on the Regency had expired, the same parliament which had been elected in 1807 determined, by a very large majority, to take the question into consideration. Since then, up to the commencement of the present session, the Catholic question has been made what is called a neutral question, any member of every government was allowed to take his own course with respect to it, the consequence of which has been most unfortunate, though perhaps unavoidable. During the whole of that period the government was divided—sometimes equally; sometimes the proportion was seven to six against concession; sometimes it was six to seven in favour of concession. Usually, however, the cabinet was equally divided. This divided government had been but an apt representative of the divided opinion of the legislature which I am addressing. Four out of the five last parliaments have, at some time or other, come to a decision in favour of the Catholic question. One House of Commons did resist the consideration of the question; but that single house, out of five, resisted its consideration by a majority of only 243 to 241. From a list of the divisions during the last ten years, I find that in 1819 there was a majority of 2 against the question; in 1823 there was a majority of 6 in its favour; in 1821 a bill was passed by a majority of 9; in 1822 the bill for the admission of Roman Catholic peers

into the House of Lords was passed by a majority of 5; in 1824 the question was not brought forward; in 1825 a bill was passed by a majority of 21; in 1826 there was a general election; and in 1827 the present House of Commons decided against the question by a majority of 4; but in the last session they had decided in its favour by a majority of 6."

Such was the state of affairs and parties at the time when Mr. Huskisson and his friends were expelled from the ministry. Among those who had been introduced into it, to supply their places, was the Honourable Vesey Fitzgerald, member for the county of Clare. His acceptance of office rendered it necessary that he should go back to his constituents. He was personally popular with all parties, and, though a Protestant, was favourable to Catholic emancipation. He was therefore supported by almost every man of wealth and property in the county of Clare. As for the forty-shilling freeholders, they had always hitherto voted according to the bidding of the great landed proprietors, who by long custom, considered themselves as having a right to command their votes. His return, therefore, seemed a matter of certainty, and no opposition was anticipated. Nevertheless, the Catholic Association determined to contest the seat, and put forward as their chosen candidate Mr. O'Connell himself, who, though disqualified from sitting in the House of Commons, might be elected as a representative, and in that capacity protest with greater effect against the injustice with which he and his co-religionists were treated. Every exertion was made to secure his election; and to encourage his supporters, he solemnly declared to them, on his reputation as a lawyer, that there was nothing in the state of the law to prevent him taking his seat, if elected. He backed this assertion by the opinion of Mr. Butler, a Roman Catholic barrister of some reputation and considerable learning. His candidature roused the enthusiasm of his countrymen to the highest pitch. From almost every altar in the county the people were solemnly urged to vote for O'Connell, and they who hesitated were denounced as renegades to their religion, and traitors to the liberties of their country. The county was traversed in every direction by agitators who inculcated the same doctrines in language still more inflammatory. The result was, that the hitherto irresistible influence of the territorial aristocracy was annihilated. The great landowners, almost to a man, supported Fitzgerald; the poor but more numerous freeholders voted with equal unanimity for O'Connell. Mr. Fitzgerald saw from the first that his cause was hopeless, and after a five days' poll, on which

his opponent had a very decided majority, he withdrew from the contest.

This event produced an immense effect throughout the whole empire, but especially in Ireland. The poor, miserable, half-starved, and less than half-civilized Irish peasant saw in it the dawn for him of a social and political millennium. A first great victory had been gained over his oppressors, and he hailed it as an omen of many futuro successes. Henceforth his enthusiasm became wilder, his confidence in his great leader more unbounded. If the signal for rebellion had been then given, it would have been promptly and generally obeyed, and a civil war would have ensued, which, though it might ultimately have been crushed by the superior power of England, would certainly have assumed very formidable proportions. On the other hand, nothing could exceed the consternation with which the Protestants regarded this great defeat of their party. It revealed to them the full extent of the Catholic combination, and the intense passion and enthusiasm by which it was animated. They saw with dismay the hitherto submissive serfs now rising in a body against their landlords; and they could not help fearing that the movement, though now carried on within the limits of strict legality, might end in an outburst of violence, of which they would probably be the victims. Some of them were so alarmed that they either became avowed advocates of emancipation or shrank from all show of opposition to it. Others were goaded by terror and party spirit into still more violent resistance. Their exasperation was at its height, and their imprudent insolence was not unlikely to lead to conflicts which neither O'Connell nor the Catholic Association could prevent or restrain. In England, too, the effect produced was immense, and, on the whole, highly favourable to Catholic emancipation.

O'Connell did not allow his victory to remain unimproved. He lost no time in following it up by more vigorous efforts and a hotter agitation. Ireland was traversed from one end to the other by the agents and emissaries of the Catholic Association, making inflammatory speeches, organizing threatening demonstrations, and employing every means that could be devised to embarrass the government, and increase the prevailing disaffection. He came over to England to fulfil his pledge of taking his seat in the House of Commons; but as the session was drawing to a close, and as nothing was to be gained at the time by pressing his claim, he deferred the attempt until the commencement of the following session.

It was clear that the government could not allow this state of things to continue without making an effort to put an end to it. Blow after blow, humiliation after humiliation, was inflicted on them, and they were unable to do anything. While the Catholic party daily gained strength, they became weaker and weaker in their means of resisting it. They were humiliated in the eyes of friends and foes alike. It was therefore becoming more and more necessary that the agitation should be met either by repression or by concession. The former course was the one which the antecedents of the chief members of the government seemed to require; but it was one that involved fearful peril and responsibility. It was likely to lead to a civil war, which would produce as its first effect the massacre of those Protestants for whose supposed benefit it was undertaken. The foreign relations of the country were far from satisfactory, and there was reason to fear that the outbreak of an Irish insurrection would be followed by demands which the government could not grant without humiliation, and could not resist without extreme danger. If a war should arise what would be the position and prospects of the government, with England discontented, Ireland hold out her hands to our enemies, and an army of which a very great proportion were disaffected Irish troops? The policy of repression was not to be thought of, the policy of doing nothing could not be persevered in much longer—there remained then, nothing but the policy of concession. For the sake of the whole empire, for the sake of Ireland, for the sake, above all, of the Irish Protestants and the Irish Protestant Church, it was necessary that something should be done to satisfy the demands of the Irish Roman Catholics.

Still, this policy was attended with no small difficulties. There was indeed one course which the duke could honourably and properly take, under the circumstances, which was to admit that he had hitherto been in error, to make way for his parliamentary opponents, and to support them in those measures which they felt to be required. But even to this course very plausible objections might be urged. The cabinet had only been in existence for about half a year, and it would have been a very serious calamity, after the many administrative changes that had taken place, to break up the only strong government which had existed for some time. It would have the effect of throwing the king into the hands of the Whig party, to which in his younger days he had been attached, but with which he had broken in a manner that did not redound to his own credit, and which he now regarded with a feeling of aversion

that would render it very humiliating to him to be compelled to call them in to advise him. The duke was ready to make almost any sacrifice in order to save his sovereign from what he regarded as a degradation. He feared, too, that the Whigs, if called to power, would stipulate for permission to introduce a bill for the reform of parliament; a measure which the duke and the king regarded with even greater aversion than Catholic emancipation. Besides, the duke and his colleagues were sincerely anxious to maintain the Protestant ascendancy in Ireland, and they thought that this might be effected by certain securities, with which it was intended that the emancipation should be accompanied, but which their parliamentary opponents would probably object to introduce. Thus the duke felt himself bound, by his sense of what was due to his sovereign and his country, to retain the office on which he had so recently entered.

Mr. Peel, too, began to feel that his own consistency and the duty he owed to his own party must be sacrificed to the higher duty which he owed to his sovereign and his country. The events which were taking place in Ireland convinced him of the necessity of making some concession. He lost no time in imparting this conviction to the Duke of Wellington, and urging him to take the steps which, in his opinion, were imperatively required. At the same time, knowing that his change of opinion would be attributed to a sordid love of place, and justly feeling that he ought not to propose a concession of which he had hitherto been the chief opponent, he begged to be allowed to withdraw from the administration, promising an independent support not only to the particular measures which he thought were required by the circumstances of the times, but also to the general policy of the government. The duke, Mr. Peel, and Lord Lyndhurst, then Lord Chancellor, carefully examined the question in all its bearings, and the course which it would be advisable to adopt had been chalked out by them, but no definite resolution had been adopted. The approach of the session necessitated a decision, but the subject had not yet been mentioned to the king. Mr. Peel therefore drew up, for his majesty's information, a paper in which he stated his reasons for thinking that Catholic emancipation should be conceded without delay, and the securities by which, in his opinion, it ought to be accompanied. Armed with this document, the Duke of Wellington succeeded in wringing from his sovereign a reluctant consent to the introduction of a measure based on Mr. Peel's opinions. Hereupon Mr. Peel once more begged to be allowed to resign, and renewed his promise of

independent support to the government. The duke, however, felt that he could not hope to carry the measure unless Mr. Peel, who was its author, would take charge of it as a minister of the crown. Amidst all these negotiations, the final decision was only arrived at a few days before the opening of the session; and though some vague rumours of what was in agitation were circulated through the country, the intentions of the government were not known until they were revealed by the royal speech delivered by commission at the opening of parliament.

cordingly, in the month of March a measure of Catholic emancipation was introduced into the House of Commons, accompanied by two other bills, one of which disfranchised the forty-shillings freeholders, by whose means chiefly Mr. O'Connell had won his election; the other enacted the suppression of the Catholic Association. Thus the ministry hoped to restore contentment and tranquillity to Ireland, to secure the Church of Ireland, and to put the Irish Catholics in all important respects on a footing of equality with their Protestant fellow-countrymen. The last two measures encountered no serious opposition. The Catholics friends knew that by opposing them they might imperil the success of that great measure of justice for which they had been struggling so long, and which was now unexpectedly offered to them by their chief opponents. But the Emancipation Bill encountered a most formidable opposition both in the House and out of doors. The great Orango-Tory party, taken unawares, and complaining, with some show of reason, that they had been betrayed by their leaders, whose irresolution wore the appearance of calculated treachery, protested bitterly against the haste with which the measure was pressed forward, and clamoured for a dissolution, which would have enabled them to appeal to the Protestant prejudices of their countrymen, and might very probably have given them a majority against the bill. They were absolutely furious, and ready to ally themselves with any party who would assist them in defeating the measure and wreaking vengeance on its framers. The clergy opposed it almost to a man, and used their influence with their flocks against it. The majority of the Dissenters adopted the same course. Even in the government itself these feelings found vehement utterance. The Attorney-General, Sir C. Wetherell, to whom offers of high office had been made if he would support the measure, refused to follow his colleagues in their unexpected change of opinion, and even to draw the bill. It might have been expected that the Duke of Wellington, who had so summarily ejected Mr. Huskisson and his friends for a much lighter

act of insubordination, would not have tolerated this refusal; but the events that had followed Mr. Huskisson's dismissal had taught him caution. He knew that if the Attorney-General were removed, it would be necessary to offer the post to Sir N. Tindal, who represented the University of Cambridge, and who might very likely lose his seat there if he accepted office, which would require him to vacate it: and thus the administration would receive a blow which, at such a moment, it could ill sustain. Sir C. Wetherell was therefore permitted to remain in office; and when the bill was introduced, it found in the Attorney-General of the government which it was proposed its ablest and bitterest opponent. When it was brought in, he broke forth into vehement vituperation of his ministerial superiors, and especially Lord Chancellor Lyndhurst. "Am I, then," he exclaimed, "to blame for refusing to do that, in the subordinate office of Attorney-General, which a more eminent adviser of the crown, only two years ago, declared he would not consent to do? Am I, then, to be twitted, taunted, and attacked? I dare them to attack me! I have no speech to eat up. I have no apostasy disgracefully to explain. I have no paltry subterfuge to resort to. I have not to say a thing is black one day and white another. I have not been in one year a Protestant Master of the Rolls, and in the next a Catholic Lord Chancellor. I would rather remain as I am, the humble member for Plympton, than be guilty of such treachery, such contradiction, such unexplained conversion, such miserable and contemptible apostasy. . . . They might have turned me out of office, but I would not be made such a dirty tool as to draw *that* bill. Let who would do it, I would not defile pen or waste paper by such an act of folly, and so forfeit my character for sense and honesty. I have therefore declined to have anything to do with it."

If such sentiments were expressed in the ministry itself, and by one whose official position afforded him the means of judging the crisis, and the motives by which his chiefs were actuated, we may easily conceive what were the feelings and what the language of those outside, especially among the ignorant, whose prejudices against the Roman Catholics had been industriously fostered by one-sided histories and speeches—who saw nothing in that religion but a hellish conspiracy against the happiness and liberties of mankind, for the benefit of the priesthood, and who believed that this measure would be the means of restoring their old ascendancy, and delivering England, bound hand and foot, into their power. An opportunity for the display of these prejudices was soon afforded. Mr. Peel,

though prevented by the peculiar circumstances in which he was placed from withdrawing from the ministry, felt bound in honour to resign his seat for the university of Oxford. Some of his friends proposed him again. The Protestant party put forward in opposition to him Sir R. Inghs, an upright and honourable country gentleman, deeply imbued with the prejudices of those whose chosen champion he was, who was returned by a triumphant majority. The alienation of their old Tory friends was compensated by the support generously given to the ministry by the Whigs. By whose aid the bill was rapidly and triumphantly carried through all its stages in both Houses of Parliament. Mr O'Connell, after the passing of the measure, claimed his seat, but the House of Commons, influenced by the ministry, declared that as his return had taken place before the passing of the Emancipation Act, he was not duly elected, he was, however, immediately re-elected by the county of Clare, and took his seat without opposition.

Meanwhile, the old Protestant Tory party impatiently waited for an opportunity of wreaking their vengeance on their former leaders for what they regarded as an act of the blackest treachery. Many of them became strong reformers, and in the transient ardour of their new-born zeal, outran most of those who had hitherto taken charge of this question. On the other hand, the Whig and Catholic parties were but half satisfied. The former saw that the ministry, while it depended on them for its existence, excluded them from all participation in the framing of their measures or from the emoluments of office, and tried every means of reconciling its old supporters, and so rendering itself independent of those by whose aid it had recently triumphed. In Ireland the agitation still continued. The Catholic Association, though suppressed by the recent act, carried on its operations under a new name. Meanwhile trade, manufactures, agriculture—all stagnated. Many parishes were reduced to such a state of pauperism that all the property within their limits was insufficient for the maintenance of their poor, and assistance had to be sought from neighbouring parishes already over-burdened with the expense of supporting their own paupers. Landlords could not obtain their rents, farmers were impoverished; the agricultural labourer, whose wages were often eked out from the poor-rates, received just enough to enable him to procure for his family and himself the barest necessities of life. The manufacturing operatives of Lancashire were, in many instances, receiving only threepence and fourpence a day for more than twelve hours' labour. O'Connell stated in the House of Commons that in Ireland 7000 persons were

subsisting on three-halfpence a day; and though this statement was perhaps exaggerated, there can be no doubt that great distress prevailed, and that the Irish peasantry were reduced to the smallest allowance of the lowest kind of food.

Such was the state of things throughout the United Kingdom at the commencement of the year 1830. Parliament was again opened by commission. In the king's speech the prevailing distress was mentioned, in terms which were justly regarded as evincing a very inadequate sense of its fearful intensity, and which did not disclose any intention on the part of the ministry to introduce measures for its mitigation or removal. Amendments were accordingly moved to the address in both Houses of Parliament, the objects of which were to pledge the legislature to take the distress and means of alleviating it into their serious consideration, but in both ministers triumphed, though the minority of 105 in the Lower House—composed chiefly of old adherents of the administration—showed how unsuccessful had been their efforts to win back those who had been alienated from them by their conduct in respect to the Catholic question.

However, the government was still able to resist every attempt, however moderate, to promote parliamentary reform, but two events which occurred in the course of this year placed *that* question and its advocates in a much more favourable position than they had hitherto occupied.

The first of these events was the death of George IV. While young he had manifested a sympathy for liberal opinions, and had attached himself to the Whig party, who entertained great hopes that when he became regent he would put the administration of affairs into their hands. But these expectations were completely disappointed. From that moment he gradually detached himself from them; and during the later years of his life he manifested a deep-rooted aversion both to their principles and their persons, and especially to Earl Grey, who had become their leader. We have already seen with what reluctance he consented to the introduction of the Catholic Emancipation Bill; and there can be no doubt that his opposition to any measure of parliamentary reform would have been even more obstinate and decided.

His brother, William IV, who succeeded him on the throne, was not unfavourable to the Whigs, and was supposed to dislike the Duke of Wellington. The Whigs saw that the ministry were determined to recover, if possible, the confidence of their old supporters, and to estrange themselves more and more from those by whose aid

they had carried the Catholic Relief Bill, and maintained themselves in office since the passing of that measure. They therefore began to exchange their position of independent support to the ministry for an attitude of determined and uncompromising opposition. They took every opportunity of speaking of the new sovereign in highly adulatory terms, while they declaimed strongly against his ministers. The Duke of Wellington, seeing that the approach of the dissolution of Parliament diverted the attention of the members of the House of Commons from the measures of the government, resolved to dissolve as speedily as possible. The Opposition, on the other hand, sought by all means in their power to delay the dissolution, and insisted on first settling the appointment of a regency, in case of the king's decease before the reassembling of parliament. On this question they divided both Houses against the government, but in both they were defeated by large majorities. On the 23rd of July parliament was prorogued with the usual formalities, and on the following day dissolved by proclamation.

Thus the administration found themselves on the eve of the general election in the presence of two powerful and bitterly hostile parties—the Tories, who were still exasperated against them on account of their conduct in reference to the Catholic question; and the Whigs, who hoped to replace them in the government of the country. The former were strong for electioneering purposes in their wealth, their property, the number of boroughs which were under their control, and the violent prejudices against the Roman Catholic religion, which had long prevailed in this country, and which were carefully fostered by the ultra-Protestant party. The Whigs, on the other hand, besides having at their disposal a large amount of property and borough influence, enjoyed the support of the great majority of the people, who looked to them as the party by whose aid their political redemption was to be wrought out, and who, though at the time very inadequately represented, were by no means altogether without a voice in the choice of members of the House of Commons; for there were at that time some places, such as Preston, in which the suffrage was nearly universal. Thus the anti-reform influence of the immense number of close boroughs was to some extent neutralized, and an anti-reform ministry was assailed by means of the very system of which they were the last possible upholders.

Such was the state of things, and such the aspect of affairs, when an event occurred which resounded throughout the world,

and exercised a very powerful influence on the elections, which were just on the eve of their commencement. The French ministry, finding that each successive election produced a Chamber of Deputies more unfavourable to their views and more opposed to the royal authority—that the press was becoming more and more violent and audacious in its assaults on the government—and that changes which they thought likely to lead to its entire subversion, were otherwise inevitable, issued a body of ordinances, which fundamentally altered the then existing constitution of the country, and destroyed the liberty of the press. Those ordinances produced an insurrection, for which the French government had made no adequate preparation, and after three days' fighting in the streets of Paris, during which the troops were almost without food, the city was evacuated and left in the hands of the populace. The king abdicated in favour of his grandson, and fled to England. It was for some days doubtful whether the government of France would be monarchical or republican. The white flag, the symbol of French royalty, was discarded, and the tricolour flag, then regarded as the emblem of revolution and republicanism, was substituted for it. However, the Duke of Orleans was appointed first Lieutenant-General of the Kingdom, and afterwards King of the French.

This event produced an immense sensation throughout Europe, but especially in England, where, as we have seen, the general election was just on the point of commencing, under circumstances of peculiar gravity. Had the monarch been at that moment unpopular, he would probably, like Charles X., have been hurled from his throne. Fortunately, however, the new king, by his affable demeanour, his sailor-like bluntness, his dislike of ostentation, and his supposed liberal leanings, was highly popular throughout the nation, and especially in the metropolis. Therefore the feelings which might under other circumstances have been directed against the sovereign, were turned against his ministers, and found a ready vent in the electoral struggle. The elections—which in the large towns were almost invariably scenes of tumult and disorder—were carried on amidst greater confusion than ever, and resulted, almost in every place where the constituency was really free to elect its own representatives, in the triumph of the advocates of parliamentary reform over the ministerial candidates. In county after county the latter were defeated; in some cases by ultra Tories, bent on avenging themselves on the government for its supposed treachery in conceding Catholic emancipation; in others, by their

Whig opponents. Of the defeats which the ministry thus sustained, the most remarkable and the most damaging was that which they experienced in Yorkshire, where their great opponent, Mr Brougham, though entirely unconnected with the county, was returned without serious opposition.

The new parliament assembled on the 26th of October; but the session was not opened till the second of November, the interval having been occupied in swearing-in the members. The address in reply to the king's speech passed both Houses without a division; but in the upper chamber a debate arose upon it, which was remarkable on account of the following declaration of the prime minister in reply to some remarks made by Earl Grey—

“The noble earl has alluded to something in the shape of a parliamentary reform; but he has been candid enough to acknowledge that he is not prepared with any measure of reform; and I have as little scruple to say that his majesty's government is as totally unprepared as the noble lord. Nay, on my own part, I will go farther, and say that I have never read or heard of any measure up to the present moment which could in any degree satisfy my mind that the state of the representation could be improved, or be rendered more satisfactory to the country at large than at the present moment. I will not, however, at such an unseasonable time, enter upon the subject, or invite discussion; but I shall not hesitate to declare unequivocally what are my sentiments upon it. I am fully convinced that the country possesses at this present moment a legislature which answers all the good purposes of legislation, and this to a greater degree than any legislature ever has answered in any country whatever. I will go farther, and say that the legislature and the system of representation possess the full and entire confidence of the country, deservedly possess that confidence, and the discussions in the legislature have a very great influence over the opinions of the country. I will go still farther, and say that if at the present moment I had imposed upon me the duty of forming a legislature for any country, and particularly for a country like this, in possession of great property of various descriptions, I do not mean to assert that I would form such a legislature as we possess now—for the nature of man was incapable of reaching it at once—but my great endeavour would be to form some description of legislature which would produce the same results. The representation of the people at present contains a large body of the property of the country, in which the landed interests have a preponderating influence. Under these circum-

stances, I am not prepared to bring forward any measure of the description alluded to by the noble lord. I am not only not prepared to bring forward any measure of this nature, but I will at once declare that, as far as I am concerned, as long as I hold any station in the government of the country, I shall always feel it my duty to resist such a measure when proposed by others."

The wisdom of this declaration has often been assailed; and certainly not without reason. But when its impugnors add, as they generally have done, that if the duke had at this time conceded the transfer of the franchises of a few corrupt nomination boroughs, such as Penryn, and East Retford, the people would have been satisfied, we must demur to the statement. Believing that the diminution of the predominance of the landed interest, through the reform of the House of Commons, was a moral and political necessity, that it was rapidly becoming to a large portion of the nation a question of bread or no bread, we also believe that changes which had no tendency to remove the evils which were felt, and which would have produced no visible alleviation of them, would not have satisfied a demand for reform which owed its force to far other causes than a mere sentimental disapproval of abuses; and therefore it seems to us that, viewing the matter from the duke's stand-point, he was quite right in resisting changes which were not likely to prevent, but rather to produce, a demand for farther innovations in the same direction. But his frank and uncompromising declaration of hostility to all reform was highly impolitic. It showed the Whigs, if they were not already convinced of the fact, that they could not obtain office in any other way than by overturning the Wellington administration. The duke was now fairly at bay; he turned on his assailants with the same steady tenacity which he had displayed at Torres Vedras and Waterloo; but he took up his ground with far less skill and with very different fortune.

Never perhaps before or since had any administration become so odious to the people as was the government of the Duke of Wellington at this moment. Abuse, ridicule, argument, invective, calumny, in fact, every species of assault, were directed against them from every quarter. The shops, not only of the booksellers, but of the hennedrapers, were filled with caricatures of them, in the case of the latter they were stamped on handkerchiefs and other articles of linen or calico. The duke was usually represented in the dress of an old stage-coachman, while Sir R. Peel figured as a rat-

catcher. The old Tories were entirely alienated, and distrusted a ministry which in their opinion had already betrayed them, and might very probably betray them again. They remembered that if the duke now declared strongly against reform, he had formerly declared as strongly against Catholic emancipation. Besides, they were so blinded by passion and indignation, that they were ready to run any risks in order to take vengeance on the supposed treachery of their old leaders. Others had become reformers, hoping that the people, who were strongly imbued with anti-catholic prejudices, might, if admitted to the franchise, elect men who would retract the concessions made to the Catholics, or prevent any further legislation in that direction, and punish the authors of the hated measure with political annihilation. The Whigs, who had now completely broken with the government, clearly saw that their only chance of power lay in its overthrow. The friends of the ministry supported it without enthusiasm; its enemies were open and vehement in their attacks on it; and many, foreseeing its approaching downfall, were preparing to desert it. The ministers themselves began to see that their fall from power was inevitable. That fall was not long deferred. On the 14th of November, a motion was made by Sir H. Parnell "for the appointment of a select committee to take into consideration the estimates and amounts proposed by command of his majesty regarding the civil list." This motion was carried by a majority of 29, in spite of the strenuous opposition of the government. The defeat was not of a nature to render a resignation necessary, according to constitutional usage, and the government might very probably have tried their fortune again, if they had not been deterred from doing so by the fear of placing themselves and the party they represented in a worse position. Mr. Brougham, during the Yorkshire election, had pledged himself to the electoral body of that county to take the earliest opportunity of bringing forward a bill for the reform of the representation. Accordingly, as soon as the House assembled, and before the Speaker had even read the speech from the throne, he gave notice of his intention to carry out this pledge. His plan had been submitted to a large meeting of members, and had been approved by them. He proposed to give votes to all copyholders, leaseholders, and householders; to give members to Manchester, Glasgow, Leeds, Sheffield, and other large towns; to deprive each nomination borough of one of its representatives; to disfranchise the out-voters in towns, but not counties; to allow freemen in towns to vote if they had resided for six months; to reduce the time of

elections to a single day ; and to limit the number of members in the House to five hundred.

Such was the plan which Mr. Brougham had undertaken to introduce on the evening following that on which Sir H. Parnell's motion was carried. It was highly probable that it would be carried. If so, ministers would be compelled to resign on the question of reform, and this would necessitate the appointment of a ministry^{*} pledged either to carry Mr. Brougham's plan, or bring forward another. This danger they hoped to elude by resigning at once. Besides, by quitting office on the civil-list question, they placed their opponents in a very embarrassing position. The king strongly objected to any interference with the civil list, as an invasion of his prerogative, as likely to lead to a reduction of his own appointments, or at least to unpleasant investigations. By resigning on this question they placed their opponents in the position of assailants of the royal prerogative, and themselves in that of its champions. The ministry, therefore, resigned on the morning after their defeat on Sir H. Parnell's motion. Their resignation was accepted by the king, and communicated the same evening to both Houses. Mr. Brougham, though really unprepared to introduce his measure, professed great reluctance in consenting to its postponement at the earnest request of Lord Althorp and several other political friends, adding, at the same time, "as no change that may take place in the administration can possibly affect me, I beg to be understood that, in putting off this motion, I will put it off to the 25th of this month, and no longer."

On receiving the resignation of the Duke of Wellington and his colleagues, the king sent for Earl Grey, who from his age, his abilities, his consistent advocacy of parliamentary reform, his worth and integrity, occupied the foremost position in the Whig party, and was designated by public opinion as the man best qualified to fill the position which the Duke of Wellington had vacated. He accepted office on the express understanding that the reform of parliament was to be made a cabinet measure. From that moment the question assumed a new position. Hitherto it had figured on the banners of the Whig party along with "retrenchment," "civil and religious liberty," "vote by ballot," "triennial parliaments," and the "abolition of slavery." Henceforward adopted by the government, it assumed a paramount importance; all other questions sank into insignificance; and the nation formed itself into two hostile parties of reformers and anti-reformers: the first composed of the great mass of the people, and especially of the youth-

ful ardour, and progressive spirit of the country; the other comprehending the aged, the wealthy, the cautious, and the interested, who all combined in organising resistance to an innovation which they feared, or pretended to fear, would reproduce in this country the terrible scenes of the first French Revolution.

The support of the great majority of the nation facilitated the task which Earl Grey had undertaken, and enabled him to construct his ministry without much difficulty. Mr. Brougham accepted the office of Lord Chancellor, and was raised to the peerage by the title of Lord Brougham and Vaux. Viscount Althorp accepted the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer and the leadership of the Lower House. The Earl of Durham became Privy Seal; Viscounts Melbourne and Palmerston, Home and Foreign Secretaries. Sir J. Graham was First Lord of the Admiralty. Mr. Stanley (afterwards Earl of Derby), and Lord J. Russell (now Earl Russell), were also members of the administration, but had not as yet seats in the cabinet.

The framing of the proposed plan of parliamentary reform was entrusted to Lords Durham, Duncannon, J. Russell, and Sir J. Graham. It was recommended by this committee that all towns having fewer than 2000 inhabitants by the census of 1821 should be disfranchised entirely, and that all towns having a population of between 2000 and 4000 should for the future only send one member to parliament; that the seats thus gained should be transferred to counties or large towns; and that the voting qualification should be the payment of a certain rental which was then left blank, but was subsequently fixed at £10. This was regarded at the time as a very violent measure; and, judging by the antecedents of many of the new ministers, must have appeared to them to be fraught with great danger. But they probably felt that the state of the nation was such that they must be prepared to yield and even to risk a good deal. The popular discontent was allayed for the moment by the appointment of a reforming ministry, but there was good reason to fear that the disappointment of the hopes that had been raised would soon revive it, and aggravate the discontents which had previously prevailed.

Nor were these discontents without reason. The people of this country had for some time past been suffering cruelly, and had been forcing themselves on the attention of their lawgivers in an altogether unpleasant and unsatisfactory manner. Statements of agricultural distress, mining distress, and manufacturing distress were made, echoed, and re-echoed. Sometimes they were met by

qualified assent, sometimes by vehement contradiction; but they still continued to be put forth. But let governments and members of parliament say what they would, there *was* distress, and very serious and terrible distress too. Agricultural labourers were found starved to death, having tried to support nature with sorrel and other such-like food. In vain did landlords abate their rents, and clergymen their tithes; wages continued to fall, and at length reached such a point of depression that they did not suffice to support existence. Nay, we find that in the division of Stourbridge, in the county of Dorset, the magistrates published the following scale, according to which relief was to be given:—

When the standard quartern wheat loaf is sold at	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.
The weekly allowance, including earnings, is to be made up to—	1	0	0	11	0	10	0	9	0	8	0	7
For a labouring man	3	1	2	10	2	7	2	4	2	1	1	10
For a woman, boy, or girl, above 14 years old ..	2	4	2	2	2	0	1	10	1	8	1	6
For a boy or girl of 14, 13, or 12	1	11	1	9	1	7	1	5	1	3	1	1
" " of 11, 10, or 9	1	7	1	6	1	4	1	3	1	2	1	0
" " under 9 ...	1	5	1	5	1	3	1	2	1	1	1	0

At the time to which we refer, the quartern loaf cost 10d. Let us suppose a family consisting of a man, his wife, one boy or girl of fourteen, one boy or girl of eleven, and one little child. For these five persons there are eight shillings and ninepence altogether, that is to say, there are ten and a half quartern loaves, or forty-three pounds of bread to divide among the five, which gives a little more than eight pounds of bread for each to live on for a week, or rather more than a pound of bread per day for each to live and work on, and that without allowing anything at all for rent, fuel, drink, clothing, or washing. And to this condition the agricultural labourer was rapidly sinking everywhere; for if in some counties the allowance was on a somewhat more liberal scale, in others it was even lower than in Dorsetshire. It was clear that such a state of things could not be allowed to continue. Something must be done, and that speedily. Political economists might demonstrate that it was unavoidable; but flesh and blood will rebel. It is not therefore very surprising, though it puzzled legislators and justices of the peace a good deal, that agricultural labourers thus provided for took the matter into their own hands; that they assembled in an altogether unlawful manner, nay compelled others, though not

very much against their own will, to join them, and go about tumultuously demanding increased wages; and when this demand was refused, that they began to break threshing and other agricultural machinery, which they believed to be the chief cause of their distress. The farmers, thoroughly frightened, referred their labourers to the clergyman or landlord to ask for a reduction of tithe or rent, to enable them to pay better wages. However, these violences, as might be expected, produced little or no benefit, and things were rapidly going from bad to worse. The peasantry, finding no more machines to break, or forcibly prevented from breaking them, began secretly to set fire to stacks of corn or hay; and soon through twenty-six counties, night after night, the sky was reddened with the blaze of the nation's food going up in flame and smoke skywards. The peasantry who beheld these sad scenes often stood with folded arms grimly smiling at the work of destruction; nay, they sometimes cut the hose of the fire-engines brought to extinguish the conflagration, and in other ways obstructed the firemen. Never perhaps had this country been in a more deplorable condition; never had so deep a sadness weighed on the minds of all classes of the population as towards the close of this year 1830. Terrible imaginations magnified tenfold the terrible reality. The political atmosphere seemed to be charged with electricity. Members of the government, members of the legislature, well-to-do country gentlemen, substantial and unsubstantial farmers, were all sorely distressed, puzzled, bewildered, and affrighted. All sorts of reports were in circulation; all sorts of explanations were given of the supposed causes of these fires. There were stories of foreigners, of elegantly dressed gentlemen riding on horses or in post-chaises, who had come down to instigate the peasants to fire the ricks, or who fired them with their own hands. Cobbett also, who often employed very unmeasured language in his efforts to draw attention to the sufferings of the labouring classes and the causes of their distress, and who, notwithstanding a great deal of violence and a great deal of crotchety nonsense about bank paper, saw clearly and told plainly what required to be done, was accused most unjustly of being the instigator of the outrages committed by the labourers. Then, again, there was a mysterious "Swing," with whose name many threatening letters were signed, and who was generally supposed to be at the bottom of all the mischief. Old Lord Eldon assured the House of Lords that he was informed that the gaols contained great numbers of persons who were not natives of this country; and Lord

Sidney, in a long and intemperate letter, repeated the statement. But there was no shadow of foundation for these assertions. The simple fact was, that wars, national debt, increase of population, corn-laws, maladministration of the poor-laws, and other legislation or hindrance of legislation, had reduced the great mass of the people, and especially the agricultural labourers, to the verge of starvation and despair. They were going mad with misery; and in their madness they did mischief by which they themselves were sure to be the first and greatest sufferers. We know that it has been maintained that the condition of the people at this period was grossly misrepresented for party purposes both by Whigs and Tories, and that, in spite of partial distress, the people were really well off. Now we hold this to be a capital error, and one which, if entertained, must not only lead to a very erroneous view of the nature of the reform struggle, but also prevent those who entertain it from doing justice to the government by which the Reform Bill was proposed, and the House of Commons by which it was carried. Were the people goaded on by suffering to demand reform, or were they incited to it by the arts of a party? That the former is the true explanation of the matter is proved by innumerable petitions, from every county of England, presented to the House of Commons in the course of the year 1830, one hundred and eighty-five of which the author of this work has examined, and which distinctly show the distress that then prevailed in every part of the kingdom and in every branch of industry.* These petitions, with scarcely a single exception, breathe an ardent spirit of loyalty and attachment to the institutions of the country. Agreeing in the existence and extremity of the distress, they ascribed it to different causes; some to excessive taxation, some to the malt-tax, some to the East India Company, some to the state of the currency, to paper money, machinery, or the corn-laws; and the prayers of the petitioners are as various as their opinions.

The French Revolution of 1830, and the events which followed it both in France and England, impressed a new direction on the feelings of the working classes, and especially on the more ignorant portion of the agricultural labourers. Finding that a neighbouring people had risen in insurrection and overthrown their government; having discovered that the ruling few with all their politics are no match for the misgoverned many when they combine in their fury and despair, they resolve that they will have bread, or that none

* For full proof of this allegation, see my *History of the Reform Bill of 1832*, pp. 78—95.

else shall have it. If they cannot raise themselves out of the pit of misery in which they are sunk, they will at least pull down into it those whom they regard as the authors of their calamities. Such were the feelings and such the designs which distress and misery had engendered; and we have already seen the crimes and follies to which they had led. But now a new light had come to these sufferers. The hated government of the Duke of Wellington had been overthrown, and had been succeeded by a new government composed of "Friends of the people." They were told that the changes from which they had been taught to expect a removal, or at least an alleviation, of their miseries, were to be speedily made, and especially that the great measure of reform, which they had come to regard as the grand panacea for all their sufferings, was about to be carried; above all, that they have a "PATRIOT KING" devoted to the welfare of his people, who has chosen reform ministers, and is determined to give them every kind of support. From that moment hope sprang up again; the tumultuous assemblages ceased; the incendiary fires became less frequent; trade revived, distress diminished; and a proclamation issued by the government, condemning the outrages and directing that they should be promptly repressed, found the people already contrite and submissive. The reform government, however, were determined to show that, though friends of the people, they were no friends of their excesses. Special commissions were issued for the trial of the rick-burners and machine-breakers, who had been apprehended in great numbers; and by a mixture of judicious lenity and judicious severity, the last remnants of insubordination were almost entirely trampled out. The distress of the manufacturing districts, though less severe, was far from being inconsiderable, and manifested itself in strikes, disturbances, and assassinations.

In Ireland, the failure of the potato crop had been followed by actual famine, and a fearful increase of those outrages and assassinations so common at all times as to be regarded by English statesmen as the chronic and irremediable malady of the country.

In all these cases the ministers, feeling themselves strong in the confidence of the people, acted vigorously and wisely, and their bitterest opponents were obliged to confess that they manifested more firmness than their predecessors in office. They did what they could, which was but little, to mitigate the immediate sufferings of the unhappy and long-misgoverned Irish; they vindicated the majesty of the law by putting down and publishing crime as

far as it was possible to do so. O'Connell, who had now commenced an agitation for the repeal of the union with England, was prosecuted and convicted, though he was ultimately allowed to escape punishment; and all that could be done to repress violence and disorder was done by the government.

CHAPTER II.

FIRST INTRODUCTION OF THE REFORM BILL.

SUCH was the aspect of affairs when parliament reassembled on the 3rd of February, 1831. Earl Grey, after presenting numerous petitions in favour of reform, announced that a measure on that subject had been framed, which would be effective without exceeding the bounds of a just and well-advised moderation, and would be submitted to the other House of Parliament at as early a period as possible. In the Lower House Lord Althorp announced that the bill would be introduced on Tuesday, the 1st of March, by Lord J. Russell, who had been selected by the government for the discharge of this important duty, in consequence of the ability and perseverance he had displayed in advocating parliamentary reform in days when it was unpopular.

The selection of Lord John Russell to introduce the bill was not only wise, but almost necessary. Lord Althorp—good-natured, courteous, thoroughly honest, a sincere, tried, and enthusiastic reformer, but feeble and incapable as a legislator, and as a speaker so hesitating, tedious, and embarrassed, that it was painful to listen to him—was no match for such antagonists as Sir Robert Peel, Sir C. Wetherell, Mr. Croker, and other able debaters, who sat on the opposite side of the house, and were sure to offer the most pertinacious opposition to the intended measure. Other members of the cabinet rather accepted the bill as a concession to the demands of the people that could no longer be safely denied, than as a measure desirable on its own account. Others, again, had not the weight and the moderation which the task required. It therefore devolved almost inevitably on Lord John Russell, whose connection with the house of Bedford—identified with most of the great struggles for English liberty in modern times—gave him great

weight; whose known courage, patience, perseverance, tried attachment in the cause of reform, and above all, whose virtuous and noble character pointed him out as pre-eminently fitted to take charge of the great measure on which the government deliberately staked its existence, and on the strength of which it claimed, and received the support of the great body of the nation.

This selection was not, however, allowed to pass unchallenged. In referring to it, Sir C. Wetherell fastened on the fact that Lord J. Russell was not a member of the cabinet, and insinuated that the measure was committed to him because it had not the support of the whole government. This insinuation Lord Althorp vigorously repelled, declaring that every member of the cabinet was favourable to the bill, and that it would be regarded as a government measure. In justification of the arrangement, he reminded the House that the celebrated East India Bill was brought forward by Mr. Burke, who, like Lord J. Russell, was paymaster of the forces, and not a member of the cabinet.

The most serious difficulties which the new ministry encountered arose out of their financial measures. On this subject the expectations of their followers had been highly raised. At the last general election "reform" and "retrenchment" had figured together on their banners. On every hustings their candidates had exaggerated and inveighed against the extravagance of preceding administrations, and had led the people to expect that the accession of the Whig party to power would be at once followed by an enormous reduction in the public expenditure and the burdens of the people. Moreover, the new government had come into office through the success of Sir H. Parnell's motion on the civil list. It was therefore confidently expected by the supporters of the ministry both in and out of parliament, that very considerable reductions would be made; that the civil list, in particular, would be at once brought under the control and supervision of the House, and many items of expenditure struck out. The government, however, found themselves very much embarrassed by these expectations. William IV. was quite as tenacious of his supposed right to control the civil-list expenditure, and quite as much opposed to any parliamentary interference with that fund, or any reduction of it, as the most unreforming of his predecessors. The new government were most anxious to propitiate the sovereign, but they could not altogether ignore the circumstances under which they had obtained office. Again, when they turned their eyes from the civil list to the general expenditure of the country, they found that they succeeded an administration which had made great reduc-

tions, and in some respects had carried them farther than, under the present circumstances of the country, ministers considered safe or prudent. They were almost, or altogether, new to office, and to a great extent in the hands of subordinate officials appointed by preceding governments, who hated the names of reform and retrenchment, and who, though obliged to work under the government, were little disposed to suggest reductions, or to assist in carrying them out. Lord Althorp, with all his amiability and personal popularity, was a wretched chancellor of the exchequer. The consequence was, that the financial measures of the government signally greatly disappointed the expectations of the nation, which saw, with surprise and displeasure, that the pension-list was untouched; the army increased by 7000 men, the navy by 3000; and that an annuity of 100,000*l.* was voted to the queen in case she should survive her husband. But the disappointment was soon forgotten in the general joy and enthusiasm which the provisions of the magisterial measure of reform excited. In the mean time the press did great service to the government. It pointed out the difficulties in which the ministry were placed in a parliament filled with the nominees of boroughmongers. It asked whether a patriotic and reforming king was not to be treated as liberally as his unreforming predecessors. And it reminded the country that a reformed House of Commons would speedily enable the ministry to deal with financial questions more vigorously and unsparingly. By these and other arguments it palliated, if it could not altogether cover, the financial failures of the ministry.

At length the long-expected 1st of March arrived. The state of the House and of all its approaches testified to the intensity of the public feeling. Never before had there been so great a desire to witness the proceedings; never had the approaches to the House been so thronged. The lobbies, the staircases leading to the galleries, were all crowded. The business on which the House was engaged caused the opening of the doors, by which the public were admitted, to be delayed till nearly five o'clock. Then a tremendous struggle for admission took place, attended by so much noise and violence, that the speaker threatened to order the galleries to be cleared. This menace put a stop to the disorder, and the fortunate few who had succeeded in fighting their way into the gallery had leisure to look around them. Only about a hundred members were present at the time, but every bench in the body of the House and in the side galleries had its back labelled with the name of some member who had adopted this means of securing a

seat for the debate. As the hour of six approached, the House filled rapidly, and before it arrived, scarcely a single unoccupied place was discernible. The clock was on the stroke of six when Lord J. Russell entered, and was welcomed with a tremendous cheer.

And now we have reached the commencement of that unparalleled war of tongues, which continued with some intervals night after night, from this 1st of March 1831, to the 5th of June, 1832. Its word-battles, intensely interesting to a nation in a state of violent political ebullition, would be insupportably tedious to the cool and unexcited reader, even in the most condensed form. Nevertheless, they must ever constitute the surface of our history, nay, to some considerable extent, its pith, and substance, affording, as they do, insight into the great conflict of social forces that was going on behind them, and of which these debates were the parliamentary outcome. Our undertaking therefore imposes on us the necessity of giving some account of them, and particularly of this first discussion, more notable than any of those that succeeded it, because it was the first, and because it nearly exhausted all the arguments for and against the leading features of the measure. We shall therefore try to put before the reader not the speeches themselves, but their distilled essence. We shall first allow Lord J. Russell to unfold and explain his plan at some length, though still in a considerably condensed form; then we shall give, with much more condensation, portions of the speeches of some of those who delivered their reasons for supporting or opposing the bill. We have selected only those who are representative men, that is to say, men who expressed not only their own feelings and opinions, or those of a select circle of friends, but also the sentiments and views of large bodies of their countrymen. In every case we shall preserve the style and, as far as the exigencies of great abbreviation will allow, the very words of the different orators. In this way we hope to give the reader as good a notion as we can, in the smallest possible compass, of the nature and extent of the proposed changes and of the manner in which they were regarded.

After a short interruption, arising from the crowded state of the House, Lord J. Russell, amidst breathless and expectant silence, but in a low voice and somewhat deprecatory manner, thus unfolded his plan.

"The object of ministers has been to produce a measure with which every reasonable man in the country will be satisfied. We wish to take our stand between the two hostile parties, neither agreeing with the bigotry of those who would reject all reform, nor

with the fanaticism of those who contend that only one plan of reform would be wholesome or satisfactory, but placing ourselves between both, and between the abuses we intend to amend and the convulsion we hope to avert.

"The ancient constitution of our country declares that no man should be taxed for the support of the state who has not consented, by himself or his representative, to the imposition of these taxes. The well-known statute *de tallagio non comedendo* repeats the same language; and although some historical doubts have been thrown upon it, its legal meaning has never been disputed. It included 'all the freemen of the land,' and provided that each county should send to the Commons of the realm two knights, each city two burgesses, and each borough two members. Thus about a hundred places sent representatives, and some thirty or forty others occasionally enjoyed the privilege; but it was discontinued or revived, as they rose or fell in the scale of wealth and importance. Thus, no doubt, at that early period the House of Commons did represent the people of England; there is no doubt likewise that the House of Commons, as it now subsists, does not represent the people of England. Therefore, if we look at the question of right, the reformers have right in their favour. If we consider what is reasonable, we shall arrive at a similar result. A stranger who was told that this country is unparalleled in wealth and industry, and more civilized and more enlightened than any country was before it—that it is a country that prides itself on its freedom, and that once in every seven years it elects representatives from its population to act as the guardians and preservers of that freedom—would be anxious and curious to see how that representation is formed, and how the people choose their representatives, to whose faith and guardianship they entrust their free and liberal institutions. Such a person would be very much astonished if he were taken to a ruined mound, and told that that mound sent two representatives to parliament; if he were taken to a stone wall, and told that three niches in it sent two representatives to parliament; if he were taken to a park where no houses were to be seen, and told that that park sent two representatives to parliament. But if he were told all this, and were astonished at hearing it, he would be still more astonished if he were to see large and opulent towns, full of enterprise and industry and intelligence, containing vast magazines of every species of manufacture, and were then told that these towns sent no representatives to parliament. Such a person would be still more astonished if he were taken to Liverpool, where

there is a large constituency. He would see bribery employed to the greatest extent and in the most unblushing manner; he would see every voter receiving a number of guineas in a box, as the price of his corruption; and after such a spectacle, he would no doubt be much astonished that a nation whose representatives are thus chosen could perform the functions of legislation at all, or enjoy respect in any degree.

"The confidence of the country in the construction and constitution of the House of Commons is gone. It would be easier to transfer the flourishing manufactures of Leeds and Manchester to Gatton and Old Sarum than to re-establish confidence and sympathy between this House and those whom it calls its constituents.

"I come now to the explanation of the measure which, representing the ministers of the king, I am about to propose to the House. They have thought, and in my opinion justly thought, that no half-measures would be sufficient; that no trifling or paltering with reform could give stability to the crown, strength to parliament, or satisfaction to the country. The chief grievances of which the people complain are these: first, the nomination of members by individuals; second, the election by close corporations; third, the expense of elections. With regard to the first, it may be exercised in two ways, either over a place containing scarcely any inhabitants, and with a very extensive right of election, or over a place of wide extent and numerous population, but where the franchise is confined to very few persons. Gatton is an example of the first, and Bath of the second. At Gatton, where the right of voting is by scot and lot, all householders have a vote; but there are only five persons to exercise the right. At Bath the inhabitants are numerous, but very few of them have any concern in the election. In the former case we propose to deprive the borough of the franchise altogether. In doing so we have taken for our guide the population returns of 1821; and we propose that every borough which in that year had less than 2000 inhabitants should altogether lose the right of sending members to parliament; the effect of which will be to disfranchise sixty-two boroughs. But we do not stop here. As the honourable member for Boroughbridge (Sir C. Wetherell) would say, we go *plus ultra*; we find that there are forty-seven boroughs of only 4000 inhabitants, and these we shall deprive of the right of sending more than one member to parliament. We likewise intend that Weymouth, which at present sends four members to parliament, should in future send only two. The total reduction thus effected in the number of the members of this House

will be 168. This is the whole extent to which we are prepared to go in the way of disfranchisement.

"We do not, however, mean to allow that the remaining boroughs should be in the hands of a small number of persons, to the exclusion of the great body of the inhabitants who have property and interest in the place. It is a point of great difficulty to decide to whom the franchise should be extended. Though it is a point much disputed, I believe it will be found that in ancient times every inhabitant householder resident in a borough was competent to vote for members of parliament. As, however, this arrangement excluded villeins and strangers, the franchise always belonged to a particular body in every town. That the voters were persons of property is obvious from the fact that they were called upon to pay subsidies and taxes. Two different courses seem to prevail in different places. In some, every person having a house and being free was admitted to a general participation in the privileges formerly possessed by burgesses; in others, the burgesses became a select body, and were converted into a kind of corporation, more or less exclusive. These differences, the House will be aware, lead to the most difficult, and at the same time the most useless, questions that men can be called upon to decide. I contend that it is proper to get rid of these complicated rights, of these vexatious questions, and to give the real property and real respectability of the different cities and towns the right of voting for members of parliament. Finding that a qualification of a house rated at £20 a year would confine the elective franchise instead of enlarging it, we propose that the right of voting should be given to householders paying rates for houses of the yearly value of £10 and upwards, upon certain conditions hereafter to be stated. At the same time it is not intended to deprive the present electors of their privilege of voting, providing they are resident. With regard to non-residence, we are of opinion that it produces much expense, is the cause of a great deal of bribery, and occasions such manifest and manifold evils, that electors who do not live in a place ought not to be permitted to retain their votes. With regard to resident voters, we propose that they should retain their right during life, but that no vote should be allowed hereafter except to £10 householders.

"I shall now proceed to the manner in which we propose to extend the franchise in counties. The bill I wish to introduce will give all copyholders to the value of £10 a year, qualified to serve on juries, under the right hon. gentleman's (Sir R. Peel's) bill, a right to vote for return of knights of the shire; also that leaseholders for

not less than twenty-one years, whose annual rent is not less than £50, and whose leases have not been renewed within two years, shall enjoy the same privilege.

"It will be recollected that, when speaking of the number disfranchised, I said that 168 vacancies would be created. We are of opinion that it would not be wise or expedient to fill up the whole number of those vacancies. After mature deliberation, we have arrived at the conclusion that the number of members at present in the House is inconveniently large. Besides, when this House is reformed, as I trust it will be, there will not be such a number of members who spend their moneys in foreign countries, and never attend the House at all. We propose, therefore, to fill up a certain number of the vacancies, but not the whole of them. We intend that seven large towns should send two members each, and that twenty other towns should send one member each. The seven towns which are to send two members each are as follows:—

Manchester and Salford.	Wolverhampton, Bilston, and
Birmingham and Aston.	Sedgley.
Leeds.	Sheffield.
Greenwich, Deptford, and	Sunderland and the Wear-
Woolwich.	mouths.

The following are the names of the towns which it is proposed should send one member each to Parliament:—

Brighton.	Whitehaven, Workington,
Blackburn.	and Harrington.
Wolverhampton.	Dudley.
South Shields and Westoe.	Kendal.
Warrington.	Tynemouth and North Shields.
Huddersfield.	Cheltenham.
Bolton.	Bradford.
Stockport.	Frome.
Halifax.	Wakefield.
Gateshead.	Kidderminster.

It is well known that a great portion of the metropolis and its neighbourhood, amounting in population to 800,000 or 900,000, is scarcely represented at all; and we propose to give eight members to those who are thus unrepresented, by dividing them into the following districts:—Tower Hamlets, Holborn, Finsbury, Lambeth. Next, we propose an addition to the members of the larger counties; a species of reform always recommended, and which, I believe,

Lord Chatham was almost the first to advocate. The bill I shall beg leave to introduce will give two members to each of the three ridings into which Yorkshire is divided—the east, west, and north—and two additional members to each of the following twenty-six counties, of which the inhabitants exceed 150,000:—

Chester.	Warwick.	Stafford.
Derby.	Cumberland.	Sussex.
Durham.	Northampton.	Nottingham.
Gloucester.	Cornwall.	Surrey.
Lancaster	Devon.	Northumberland.
Norfolk.	Essex.	Leicester.
Somerset.	Kent.	Southampton.
Suffolk.	Lincoln.	Worcester.
Wilts.	Salop.	

“I now beg leave to direct the attention of the House to that part of the plan which relates to the expense of long-protracted polls, and which, while it removes that evil, also greatly facilitates the collection of the sense of the elective body. We propose that all electors in counties, cities, towns, or boroughs, shall be registered; and for this purpose machinery will be put in motion similar to that of the Jury Act—that is to say, at a certain period of the year (I now speak of boroughs) the parish officers and churchwardens are to make a list of persons who occupy houses of the yearly value of £10. This list of names will be placed on the church doors, we will suppose in September; and in October the returning officer will hold a sort of trial of votes, where claims made and objections stated will be considered and decided. On the 1st of December the list will be published; every person who chooses may obtain a copy of it; and it will be the rule to govern electors and elections for the ensuing year. The means of ascertaining who are the electors being thus easy, there is no reason why the poll should be kept open for eight days, or, as in some places, for a longer period; and it is proposed that, nearly according to the present law, booths shall be erected in the different parishes, so that the whole poll may be taken in two days. For my own part, I may say that I expect the time will come when the machinery will be found so simple, that every vote may be given in a single day; but in introducing a new measure, it is necessary to allow for possible defects. Attempts might be made to obstruct the polling; and I therefore recommend two days, in order that no voter may be deprived of the opportunity of offering his suffrage.

"As to the counties, the matter may be somewhat more difficult. We propose that the churchwardens should make out a list of all persons claiming the right to vote in the several parishes, and that these lists shall be affixed to the church doors; a person to be appointed (say, a barrister of a certain standing) by the judge of assize shall go an annual circuit within a certain time after the lists have been published, and he will hear all claims to vote and objections to voters. Having decided who are entitled to exercise the privilege, he will sign his name at the bottom of the list, and will transmit it to the clerk of the peace, and it will then be enrolled as the list of freeholders of the county for the ensuing year.

"Everybody knows and must have lamented the enormous expense to which candidates are put in bringing voters to the poll. In Yorkshire, without a contest, it costs nearly £150,000; and in Devonshire the electors are obliged to travel forty miles, over hard cross roads, which occupies one day, the next is consumed in polling, and the third in returning home; the whole a manifest source of vast expense and most inconvenient delay. We propose, therefore, that the poll shall be taken in separate districts, those districts to be arranged according to circumstances by the magistrates in quarter sessions, and not changed for two years. The sheriffs will hold the election on a certain day; if a poll is demanded, they will adjourn the election to the next day but one, and the poll will be kept open for two days. On the third day the poll will be closed, and on the sixth day an account of the number of votes will be published. It shall be so arranged, that no voter shall have to travel more than fifteen miles to give his vote. It is also proposed that the number of polling places in each county shall not exceed fifteen, as the multiplication of places for receiving the votes would give rise to great inconvenience. We propose that each county should be divided into two districts, returning each two members to parliament. There will be some difficulty in adjusting these districts; but I propose that his majesty shall nominate a committee of the Privy Council to determine their extent and direction. In some of the boroughs to which the right of representation will be continued, the number of electors is exceedingly small. We shall therefore insert in the bill a clause, giving power to the commissioners nominated under that bill to enable the inhabitants of the adjoining parishes and chapelries to take part in the elections, when the number of electors in such borough shall be below 300. That these are extensive powers I shall not attempt to deny; and if any gentleman in the House will

suggest a better, safer, and more constitutional mode of effecting the object, his majesty's ministers will have no hesitation in adopting that mode, and waiving their own.

"I have now only one thing more to say with regard to the representation of England. In all those new towns to which we propose to give the right of sending members to parliament, all persons who are entitled by their property to vote, shall be excluded from the right to vote for the representatives of the county; but it is not intended to interfere with the franchise of those freeholders who are at present entitled to vote. With respect to the right of the forty-shilling freeholders, I do not think that there should be any alteration."

In obedience to the loudly expressed wish of the House, Lord J. Russell then read, amidst great laughter and much cheering, a list of boroughs which the bill proposed to disfranchise, as having fewer than 2000 inhabitants, according to the population returns of 1821; as well as that of boroughs to be semi-disfranchised, as having a population under 4000, according to the same census.*

After mentioning what the government proposed to do with regard to the reform of Scotland and Ireland, Lord John thus proceeded:—

"The result of all the measures comprehended in this bill, as affecting the number of members in this House, will be, that of the present number of 658—168 being taken off by the disfranchisement of the boroughs—490 will remain. To that number five being added as the increase of members for Scotland, three for Ireland, eight for London, and 90 for the rest of England and Wales, making the future number of members of the united parliament 596, the decrease of the present number will accordingly be sixty-two. The number of persons who will be entitled to the suffrage under this bill, not previously possessing that right, will, I suppose, be in the counties 110,000; in the towns, 50,000; in London, 95,000; in Scotland, 50,000; in Ireland, about 40,000; and it is my opinion that the measure will add to the constituency of the Commons House of Parliament about half a million of persons, all connected with the property of the country, having a valuable stake amongst us, and deeply interested in our institutions. They are persons on whom we may depend in any future struggle in which the nation may be engaged, and who will maintain and support parliament

* For these lists see the author's larger history, which also gives the prevailing influence in each borough, and the number of the constituency.

and the throne in carrying that struggle to a successful termination. I think this measure will farther benefit the people by inciting them to industry and good conduct. For when a man finds that by industry and attention to his business he will entitle himself to a place in the list of voters, he will have an additional motive to improve his circumstances and preserve his character. I think, therefore, that in thus adding to the constituency, we are providing for the moral as well as for the political improvement of the country.

"Language has been held as if I had said that the institutions of the country could by their own indirect strength defend every attempt at sedition, if no reform were adopted. In my opinion, the question has little to do with sedition or rebellion. The question is, whether, without some large measure of reform, the government, or any government, can carry on the affairs of the country with the confidence and support of the nation. If this cannot be done, then it may become a question whether reform can be resisted; but there can be no question that in such a case the British constitution must perish. The House of Commons in its unreformed state has nothing to look to but public confidence and the sympathy of the nation for its support. It appears to me that if reform is refused, all such sympathy and confidence will soon be withheld. I ask whether, when the ministers of the crown consider that reform is necessary, when the sovereign has permitted them to lay before the House their proposition, and when they come with that proposition to declare in the most unequivocal manner that they consider reform to be indispensable; and when people out of doors, by multitudes of petitions and millions of voices, are calling for the same thing, is it for the House of Commons to say, 'We are the judges of our own purity; we equally despise the ministers of the crown and the voice of the people; we will keep our power against all remonstrances and all petitions; and we will take our chance of the dreadful consequences?' I appeal to the gentry and the aristocracy of England. In my opinion, they were never found wanting in any great crisis of the country. When war was carrying on against the national enemy, they were always the foremost to assert the national honour: and when great sacrifices were to be made and great burdens to be supported, they were as ready to bear their proportion as the rest of their fellow-subjects. I ask them now—now that a great sacrifice is to be made for the public safety and the general good—will they not show their generosity, will they not evince their public spirit, and identify themselves in future with the people?

I ask them to come forward under these circumstances and give stability, political strength, and peace to the country. Whatever may be the result of the proposition I have made to the House, I must say that his majesty's ministers will feel that they have thoroughly done their duty in bringing the measure forward; neither seeking for the support of particular classes nor the applause of the multitude. When they have felt it their duty to resist popular feelings, they have not hesitated to encounter and withstand them by a firm and vigorous enforcement of the law, by which many disturbances have been prevented or suppressed, I trust permanently. By their vigorous enforcement of laws passed before they entered office, agitation has been made to subside, and peace has been re-established. In no case could it be said that ministers have wavered in their duty by bending to popular clamour, or by seeking to ingratiate themselves in popular and transient favour. I have a right to say that, in submitting the present proposition to the House, they have evinced an interest in the future welfare of the country. They think that what they propose is the only thing calculated to give permanence to the constitution, which has so long been the admiration of foreign nations on account of its free and popular spirit, but which cannot exist much longer except by an infusion of new popular spirit. By these means the House will show to the world that it is determined no longer to be an assembly of the representatives of small classes and particular interests, but that it is resolved to form a body of men who represent the people, who spring from the people, who have sympathies with the people, and who can fairly call upon the people to support their burdens in the future struggles and difficulties of the country, on the ground that they who ask them for that support are joining hand and heart with them, and, like themselves, are seeking only the glory and welfare of England."

Lord J. Russell then sat down, amidst loud and prolonged cheering from all sides.

The motion which he made for leave to bring in the bill was briefly seconded by Sir J. Sebright.

The first man who rose to oppose the motion was Sir R. H. Inglis, member for the University of Oxford; an elegant scholar, a thorough gentleman, a worthy and honest man. He admirably represented the opinions and prejudices of the country gentlemen and clergy of the day. Nobody in the House was more deservedly popular and respected, none more strongly resisted every proposed alteration of the existing institutions of the country. After some

preliminary observations, he thus proceeded to deal with the arguments which the proposer of the motion had advanced in favour of the bill :—

“ We are not sent here for the particular spot which we represent, but to consider the affairs of the country and the good of the Church. When a member is returned to this House, he ceases to be responsible to his constituency. It is at the end of the period when he has to serve them in parliament that he again comes before them, and it is then only that he is accountable to them. In the United States, in France, or in Belgium where there are changes from day to day, the proposition of the noble lord might find favour; but in England the case is very different. I know there are such men as Delolme and Montesquieu, who have taken on themselves to talk of representation being founded on the basis of population and taxation; but I can find no trace of such a principle in any of the ancient times of our constitution. If it can be shown that places were returned to send members which were neither parishes nor market towns, I presume it will be admitted that those places could not be very considerable. Now, there are Haslemere and West Looe, which have never been one nor the other, and yet they have been called on to send representatives to parliament. And not only have small towns been called on to send representatives, but large towns have been left unrepresented; and this is a most important point in answer to those who pretend that they only ask for the restoration of the constitution. Can the noble lord show that any town or borough has been called into parliamentary existence because it was large or populous, or excluded from it because it was small? The noble lord has tried to make much of the instance of Old Sarum. In one and the same year, the 23rd Edward I., a writ was issued to both Old and New Sarum, and in neither case was it conferred on account of population or taxation. On the contrary, I believe it was given, in the first instance, to oblige some Earl of Salisbury, by putting his friends into the House. And in an account of the borough, it was stated that it had lately been purchased by Mr. Pitt, the possessor of the celebrated diamond of that name, who has obtained an hereditary seat in the House of Commons, as much as the Earl of Arundel possessed one in the House of Peers by being the owner of Arundel Castle. How, then, can it be said that, according to the constitution of the country, noblemen are not to be represented and their interests regarded in this House? The cause of the creation of many boroughs is, I believe, obscure: but, on the other hand, some were

as clear and as well ascertained as possible. It is known that two writs to return members were issued by Elizabeth at the desire of one of her favourites, Sir Christopher Hatton; and Newport in the Isle of Wight had received its franchise to please Sir George Carew. This is the history of many of the small boroughs; and all the Cornish boroughs were formed in that manner. Fifteen Cornish boroughs had at one time received the right of representation, some of which were small villages, and none of them entitled to rank as considerable among the towns of England. It is in vain after this to talk of the purity of representation in former times. I defy the noble lord to point out any time when the representation was better than it is at present. I say, therefore, that what is proposed is not restorative. The House and the country may judge what it is; but I will state, in one word, that it is REVOLUTION—a revolution that will overturn all the natural influence of rank and property.

“I have omitted to observe in the proper place, that many of the towns to which the noble lord proposes to give the elective franchise were considerable places at the period when the right of representation was given to other places, and yet they were omitted. Halifax three hundred years ago was known to have a population of 8400; Wakefield was a most considerable town at the same time; and Manchester, according to tradition, had not less than 5400 inhabitants for two hundred years before the year 1580; and, at all events, it is certain that at the latter period it possessed the amount of population I have just mentioned. But can it be said in answer to this that no boroughs have been created after that time, and that therefore it had not been possible to do justice to such considerable places? Just the reverse of this is the fact; for after the date to which I have referred with respect to Halifax, fifty-one boroughs have been summoned to send representatives to Parliament; and after the date with respect to Manchester, fourteen boroughs had received writs. But I have another objection to that part of the proposition of the noble lord in which he would have taxation and representation go hand in hand. There are individuals who only come into this house by a casting vote. In such cases the minority is all but equal to the majority: and yet they are to have no representation. If this principle of the noble lord is worth anything, it is worth this: that no person of such minority would be bound to pay the taxes or obey the laws that were enacted, as his representative had no share in their formation.

“The great benefit of the constitution of the House of Commons as it now exists is that it represents all interests and admits all

talents. If the proposed change takes place, it will be almost entirely confined to one interest, and no talent will be admitted but the single one of mob oratory. Many of those who sat for 'close and rotten boroughs,' as they have been designated for the first time by a member of the government, have constituted the chief ornaments of the House and the support of the country; but would, if this plan had been adopted in their days, never have been received into the House. I ask the noble lord by what means the great Lord Chatham came into Parliament? By the bye, the first borough for which that great man sat was Old Sarum itself. Mr. Pitt sat for Appleby. Mr. Fox came in for a close borough; and when rejected for a populous place, he again took refuge in a close borough. Mr. Burke first sat for Wendover; and when by that means he became known, he was transposed in his glory to Bristol, as Mr. Canning, who also first sat for Wendover, was transposed to Liverpool. When their talents became known, they were the honoured representatives of large towns; but would such places ever have thought of selecting Mr. Canning, Mr. Burke, or Lord Chatham, if they had not previously had an opportunity of showing their talents in the House? It is only by this means that young men who are unconnected by birth or residence with large towns can ever hope to enter this House, unless they are cursed—I will call it cursed—with that talent of mob oratory which is used for the purpose of influencing the lowest and most debasing passions of the people."

Mr. Hume, the member for Middlesex, and leader of the more moderate portion of the radical party, frankly declared that, "radical reformer as he was, the plan proposed much exceeded his expectations, and that, with all his disposition to put confidence in ministers, he was not prepared to find them come forward with so manly a measure." "They have," said he, "fully redeemed their pledge; and though, in my opinion, the omission to shorten the duration of parliament and to introduce the ballot are deficiencies, yet as they are points on which a large number of members have not made up their minds, ministers have acted wisely in not enumbering the present measure with them, as they can be brought forward at any time as separate questions. . . . I can assure the House, that all those with whom I have conversed are satisfied with the measure. Many whom I know to be the strongest reformers in England allowed that they have the utmost reason to be delighted. . . . I have no doubt that many think the qualification too high; but there is too much sense in the British com-

munity not to feel that vast good will result from this measure, though some may not immediately participate in its benefits."*

The next speaker we shall select will be our old acquaintance, Orator Hunt, now representing the town of Preston. His approbation of the measure was much less warm than Mr. Hume's, and as the discussion proceeded, became icy cold; in fact, was changed into something very closely approximating to opposition. He acknowledged that the measure went beyond his expectations, but declared that he had not heard a single word in the course of the debate that was new to him. "All," said he, "that has been said in this House has been said twenty years ago by the weavers of Lancashire. As the bill does not touch the rights of my constituents, I will give it my support; but I am sorry that so little is said about the ballot and the duration of parliaments. The suffrage is not widely enough extended, if the rabble, as they are called, are not to have votes. Am I to be told that the people who have fought the battles of the country, the lower orders, whom I call the useful classes of society, are to be called on to pay taxes on every article of human subsistence, and afterwards denied the right of choosing representatives? I plainly tell the House, and I speak the voice of millions, that such an exclusive doctrine will give no satisfaction out of doors. I am delighted to hear that the rotten boroughs are to be sacrificed. Some honourable members have called the measure proposed by the noble lord not reform but revolution, and an alteration in the constitution. Now, I will admit that statement to be correct, the moment it is proved that rotten boroughs are a part of the constitution. When the honourable member for Calne (Mr. Macaulay) talked of the *rabble*, he looked very hard at me" (These words were received by the House with shouts of laughter.)

"I understand," continued Mr. Hunt, "the meaning of that laugh; and I am only sorry that the honourable and learned member has not remained in his place, that I might have looked in the same way at him. . . . I have been in the habit, for many years past, of attending large public meetings, composed of persons whom the honourable and learned member for Calne has chosen to call the rabble; but I will undertake to say that they are a much more intelligent rabble than the electors of Calne. That Calne is one of the most degraded of rotten boroughs; and I wonder by what chance the ministers have overlooked that most rotten and stinking

* Mr. Macaulay's speech is omitted, because it has been published in the collection of his speeches.

hole of corruption in their sweeping measure of reform. We have been told by the honourable and learned member for Calne, that if the present measure is not conceded to the middle classes, we shall have revolution and massacre. What sort of massacre is it that the hon. member has alluded to? I remember that when the people of Manchester assembled together in 1819, as legally and as peaceably as the hon. members are now assembled in this House, for the purpose of petitioning for a reform in Parliament and a repeal of the corn-laws—and their petitions were couched in much more respectful and moderate language than many petitions which have been lately presented to this House—then, indeed, there was a massacre. (Cries of “No, no.”) I say yes. The meeting was constitutionally and peaceably assembled, and what was the result? Why, a drunken and infuriated yeomanry—(“Order,” “order,” “question,” “question,”)—with newly ‘sharpened sabres—(“question,” “question,”)—rushed among the people and chopped them to pieces. (“No, no,” “order, order.”) They slaughtered to death fourteen—(“No, no,”)—cut and badly wounded six hundred and eighteen.” Here the excitement and outcries became so great, that Mr. Hunt was unable to proceed, nothing daunted, however, by the interruption, he lifted up his powerful voice above the tumult, and exclaimed in his most stentorian tones:—“Where is the man who says no? I repeat, that this infuriated yeomanry murdered fourteen, wounded and slaughtered six hundred and eighteen, of as peaceable and well-disposed subjects of his majesty as any I see around me at the present moment. At that meeting I was advocating the cause of reform. And I was astonished to hear the noble lord, the paymaster of the forces, say, in bringing forward the present measure, that the government had not taken up the question before, because the people of England had not called upon them in a manner to justify the interference of government. The people of England have for many years past been anxious for reform, and in the years 1816, 1817, 1818, 1819, loudly expressed their wishes for some measure to amend the state of the representation. . . . I certainly thought that the scene which was exhibited in the House yesterday, when the noble lord brought forward the reform measure, had never been equalled since the time of the Revolution, when Cromwell came into the House and took away the bauble of the mace. When I was tried, condemned, and sentenced to suffer two years and six months’ imprisonment in a dungeon—(Here Mr. Hunt was interrupted by laughter and loud cries of, “question,”)—I think it is very hard, that while some

members, in urging the question of reform, have gone back to the time of Edward III., I am not allowed to refer to transactions which have taken place within the last twenty-nine years. (Here renewed interruption occurred.) Well, then," exclaimed Mr. Hunt, "I will tell the people of England, that the man whom they have sent to this House to advocate their right is not allowed to be heard. ("No, no.") But I say, *yes, yes!* I repeat," continued the imperturbable orator, "when I was condemned to suffer two years and six months' imprisonment in a solitary dungeon, for advocating that question which is now advocated by so many honourable members in this House, I little expected to see a measure of reform proposed by government; though I knew that Lord Chatham had said, that if reform did not come from within, it would come from without with a vengeance. The honourable member for Calne has said that none but a few crazy radicals in the street would ever dream of invading the rights of the throne. I ask that honourable and learned member where any of those radicals are to be met with? I am as thorough-going a radical as ever paced the Strand; but I defy the hon. and learned gentleman to prove that I have ever proposed to attack the privileges of the crown, though I have often enough protested against the extravagance of the family on the throne, and the misconduct of this House which has brought the institutions of the country into disrepute."

We next come to Sir C. Wetherell, the comical member of the House, and withal one of the ablest—the darling and champion of the high Tory party. "It appears," he said, "that by this bill of the military paymaster, sixty boroughs are to be deprived of their franchise, and of the right of sending one hundred and twenty members to parliament, and that forty-seven are to lose one member each; and that in the whole, one hundred and sixty-eight members are to be ejected from this House. I do not wish to call this by an offensive term; but as a great man, Mr. Locke, has said that things should be called by their right names, I call this 'corporation robbery.' But then there is to be a sort of restitution made, 'except that there will be sixty members less in the House than there are now.' But does this make the robbery less? Is it less a measure of robbery and pillage, if you take from AB and CD, and give to EF, and if the House is to be composed of sixty members less than at present? The present cabinet of Althorp and Co. seem to have proceeded upon the precedent in the history of England which was given by Cromwell, Fairfax, Millburne, and Co. This plan of cutting off the boroughs and diminishing the number

of members has not the merit of originality; for it is almost the same in form, in substance, and in principle, as the radical system of reform which was introduced by the regicides when they established a commonwealth in England."

After proceeding in the same strain at great length, the honourable gentleman thus perorated:—

"I have now performed, and I trust within reasonable limits, the duty which I owe to myself, to the British public, and the House of Commons, in making the observations on this bill which I have found myself compelled to make, and I have now but a few more words to utter. There existed in Cromwell's time a purge of the House of Commons. (Laughter.) That purge was called Colonel Pride's purge. (Laughter and cheering.) The gentlemen on the opposite side of the House are close imitators of the Cromwellian system; not only of his system of parliamentary reform, but also of his sanitary and purgative system; for they are prepared to expel, by one strong dose, no fewer than one hundred and sixty-eight members from the House. I do not know what name should be attached to this specific, for I did not conceive it possible that the country would see a repetition of such a process. Within the last three days, however, the House has been promised a purge, to which, as no name has been attached, I will attach the name of 'Russell's purge' (Screams of laughter, and great cheering for some time) I say that the principle of the bill is republiкан at the basis; I say that it is destructive of all property, of all right, of all privilege; and that the same arbitrary violence which expelled a majority of members from that House at the time of the Commonwealth, is now, after the lapse of a century from the revolution, during which the population has enjoyed greater happiness than has been enjoyed by any population under heaven, proceeding to expose the House of Commons again to the nauseous experiment of a repetition of Pride's purge." Tremendous cheering followed the delivery of this speech, and lasted for several minutes.

The next speech which we shall notice is that of Lord Palmerston, the representative of the party of Messrs. Huskisson and Canning—a party which had hitherto been almost as strongly opposed to parliamentary reform as the Duke of Wellington himself. A considerable part of his speech was taken up with justifying and defending the policy of the administration to which he belonged. Coming at length to the question immediately before the House, he said—

“What is it which for years has produced so much misgovern-

ment, so much disregard of public opinion? The gross bribery practised at elections, by means of which parties come into parliament, and undue influence at elections for members of this House, by means of which so many of them come in, either without constituents, or only with those whom they have purchased and may sell again. When, then, by such practices, the people were driven to tear aside the veil of sanctity with which hereditary respect had invested even the imperfections of the constitution, it was impossible that they whose limited propositions of reform had been rejected would not be led to demand wider and more extensive changes. There are many men in this House who wish things to remain as they are, and who are willing to bear the faults of the constitution for the sake of its many excellences. I will tell them, that if they are now driven to the necessity of choosing between a change which they fear, and the evil consequences which would arise from the refusal of that change, the blame must rest on those who three years ago refused to make even the smallest concession to public feeling. If, three years ago, advantage had been taken of the conviction of corrupt boroughs, to bring gradually into connection with this House the great unrepresented towns—if, instead of drawing nice equations between the manufacturing and agricultural interests they had turned reformers on even a moderate scale—the House would not now have been discussing a plan of general reform, proposed by my noble friend, his majesty's paymaster of the forces. I supported all these plans of limited reform, because I thought them good in themselves, and because I saw that if they were refused, we should be obliged to have recourse to wider and more extensive changes. But my predictions were condemned and disregarded by the gentlemen opposite. For reasons similar to those for which I then supported those limited propositions of reform, I am now prepared to support the more extensive measure which has been proposed by my noble friend."

The next speaker was Sir R. Peel. Admirable in tact, in talent, and in the management of details, he was unable to conceive or accept a great and organic change. His temper, cautious even to timidity, led him generally to yield before it was too late, but never to yield too soon. The reform bill, however, involved far too large a stride for his mind to take at once; and he resisted it with all his power, and to the very last. He began his speech by declaring that he was not one of those who joined in taunting Lord Palmerston on account of the change of his opinions, and begged to assure him that his character, conduct, and views afforded a sufficient guarantee for the purity of his intentions.

Applying himself to the arguments which had been employed against the close borough system, Sir Robert thus proceeded :—

"It is usually and, as it appears to me, most convincingly argued, that these boroughs are advantageous, by affording the means of access to the House to men who have no claims beyond their ability. Two objections have, in the course of this debate, been urged against that argument. The one—which, I must say, came with a very bad grace from the hon. member for Westminster (Mr. Hobhouse), himself a man of great ability—was, that it is by no means desirable that men of splendid talents should be members of this House; that in a reformed parliament, solid sense and integrity would be more highly valued. Now I, on the other hand, maintain that nothing tends more to foster the public respect for this House than its being the great arena of talent and eloquence, and that nothing would lower it more in public estimation than that it should be below the average ability of educated gentlemen.

"I have this morning turned over a list of from twenty to twenty-five of the most distinguished men that have graced this House for the last thirty or forty years,—men of whom it might be said, in the glowing language of Lord Plunkett, that they were possessed of that "buoyancy of genius which would float them down the stream of posterity;" and I found that, with three exceptions, they were all returned for boroughs which the noble lord's bill would wholly disfranchise. There was Mr. Gunning, Lord North, Mr. Townshend, Mr. Burke, Mr. Flood, Mr. Pitt, Mr. Fox, Lord Grenville, the Marquis Wellesley, Mr. Perceval, Lord Plunkett, Mr. Canning, Mr. Wyndham, Mr. Horne, Mr. Huskisson, Mr. Brougham, Sir S. Romilly, Lord Castlereagh, Mr. Tierney, Sir W. Grant, Lord Grey, and the late Lord Liverpool, all first returned for close boroughs, and but three of them ever members for counties. Nor is the mere facility of admission the only benefit. The introduction, by affording them an opportunity—the essential condition of successful talent—for displaying their legislative ability on a larger scale, recommended them to a more extended franchise at a more mature age; and again, when they, by caprice, or want of money, or otherwise, were deprived of their larger seats, those close boroughs, which the noble lord's bill would destroy altogether, received them, and secured their invaluable labours to their country. Such was the case when Mr. Sheridan was defeated at Stafford. He found shelter at Ilchester. Mr. Wyndham having failed at Norwich, took refuge at Higham Ferrers, and Lord Castlereagh, in like manner, having lost his election in the county of Down, was returned for Oxford. Mr. Tierney also, when he lost

Southwark, was returned for Knaresborough; and Lord Grey for Tavistock, when defeated in Northumberland. All this proves that the tendency, and not the mere accident, of the close-borough system, is to facilitate the entrance of men of ability, who otherwise could not obtain a seat in this House. And is this system, thus working so advantageously for the general weal—so fostering of talent and statesmanlike ability—to be destroyed, in obedience to the noble lord's plan? During 150 years the constitution, in its present form, has been in force; and I would ask any man who hears me to declare whether the experience of history has produced any form of government so calculated to promote the happiness and secure the rights and liberties of an enlightened people? Many other experiments have been tried to engraft democratical on monarchical institutions, but how have they succeeded? In France, in Spain, in Portugal, in the Netherlands, in every country on the face of the earth, with the exception of the United States, has the experiment of forming a popular government, and of uniting it with monarchy, been tried; and how, I will again ask, has it succeeded? In America, the House has been told that the most beneficial effects of a representative form of government are plainly visible. But I beg to remind the House that there is a wide difference indeed between the circumstances of this country and of America. In the United States the constitution has not been in existence more than forty years. It was not till the year 1779 that the representative part of the American system of government was established, and since that time many important changes, as everybody knows, have been made respecting the mode of electing their president. As yet, everything is in uncertainty, for ever since the first establishment of the government of the United States it has been undergoing a change. I will not say it has been deteriorating, for I wish to avoid all invidious phrases; but it has rapidly been undergoing a change from a republic to a mere democracy. The influence of the executive—the influence of the government—has been daily becoming less, and more power has consequently been vested in the hands of the people. And yet, in that country, there is land uncultivated to an extent almost incalculable; there is no established church, no privileged orders; property exists on a very different tenure from that on which it is held in this country; therefore let not the people of England be deceived, let them not imagine, from the example of the United States, that because democracy has succeeded and triumphed there, it will also succeed and triumph here."

He next pointed to the failure of democracy in the States of

South America, and maintained that the question of reform always flourished when there was either the pressure of some great difficulty in the country, or a revolution on the Continent. In support of this assertion, he instanced its being brought forward in 1745, during the American war in 1817, 1819, and 1822—in a word, in every period when there was great commercial and agricultural distress in this country; and again in 1780, on the establishment of American independence; in 1790, at the commencement of the great French Revolution; and now again, when a new revolution had occurred in France. He concluded as follows:—

“I lament exceedingly that government should have determined to agitate such a question as that of reform at this particular crisis; it would have been wiser, in my opinion, to have avoided these new causes of excitement; for, depend upon it, that by this process throughout the land the first seeds of discontent and disunion are sown. In every town there will be a conflict—a moral conflict, I mean—between the possessors of existing privileges and those to whom the existing authority and existing privileges are to be transferred. Oh, sir, I lament beyond measure, that government had not the prudence to adhere to that temperate course of policy that they had pursued elsewhere. I lament that, if they did think it necessary to propose a plan of reform in this excited state of the public mind, they did not confine it within those narrow limits which are consistent with the safety of the country and the dignity of their own characters. They have thought proper, however, to adopt another course; they have sent through the land the firebrand of agitation, and it is easy so far to imitate the giant enemy of the Pluhstines, as to send three hundred firebrands through the country, carrying danger and dismay in all quarters; but it is not easy, when the mischief is done, to find a remedy for it. In the present difficulties of your situation, you should have the power of summoning all the energies of life, and should take care that you do not signalize your own destruction by bowing down the pillars of the edifice of your liberty, which, with all its imperfections, still contains the noblest society of freemen known to the habitable world.”

This speech was answered by Mr. Stanley * Referring to a passage in which Sir Robert Peel said that he would take the bill in his hand, and go with it to his constituents, and appeal to them on the ground of his opposition to it, Mr. Stanley observed—

“I suppose that every gentleman opposed to this measure will make his appeal where he has constituents, and those who are so

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* The late Lord Derby.

fortunate as not to have any constituents—I mean individuals who are returned by patrons of boroughs—will doubtless make the same representation in the proper quarter. It is therefore evident that those gentlemen look more to the private interests, passions, and feelings of a large portion of the people, than to the welfare of the country at large. But the right hon. baronet said, ‘If any danger arises from this measure, impute it not to those who oppose it. I throw the responsibility on your own shoulders.’ I however will contend, that the responsibility must rest with those gentlemen on the other side of the House, who could not go on with the government because they were prepared to resist all reform, and went out when they could not prevent it from being carried, though it was loudly called for by the people. If they afterwards endeavour to baffle the efforts of those who have succeeded them, they must take upon themselves the responsibility that will attach to the loss and defeat of that great measure. . . .

“My honourable friend (Sir R. Peel) talked of the advantages to be derived from nomination—he contended that it afforded an opportunity of admitting very clever men into the House, who might not be able to find a seat in any other way. Whatever advantage might be derived from this mode of admission would be more than balanced by this disadvantage—that the class of persons thus introduced would, whatever may be their talents and acquirements, not be looked upon by the people as representatives.

“We were told last night that this measure would admit 500,000 persons to the councils of the nation. In my opinion it will do no such thing. It will admit them to the possession of rights which belong to them from their wealth and intelligence, and consequent importance in the political scale. By this means we shall attach them to the institutions of the country, and gain more from their affection than we could by keeping them unconnected with, and at a distance from, the benefits of the constitution. But then it is said that the measure is revolutionary. To this it is scarcely necessary that I should urge more in reply than a mere denial of any such object on the part of those who introduced it. Is my noble friend who introduced the measure into this House a man without any stake in the country? Is not the name he bears in itself a guarantee against any such intention? Is my noble friend at the head of the government, who is said to be strenuously attached to the privileges of his order, who has on more than one occasion been made the subject of attack on that ground, likely to advocate a measure which is to involve those privileges and the monarchy in one com-

mon ruin? Look round at the other members of his majesty's government, and at those who come forward to support them on this occasion. Are they men of no fortune, mere adventurers, who would have everything to gain, and nothing to lose, by a revolution? Are they not men who have large stakes in the country and whose individual interests are bound up with the permanent peace and security of the state? What, then, could they gain by a revolution? They conceive that they cannot more effectually secure the true interests of the country, and render its institutions permanent, than by basing them on the affections of the people. For my own part, I feel no alarm of the kind for the results of the bill. By that bill the influence of the aristocracy will be upheld—I mean the influence which they ought to possess; not the influence of bribery and corruption, not the influence of direct or indirect nomination.

"Ministers came into office pledged to economy, reduction, and reform. These pledges they have redeemed. They have cut off from themselves and their successors, for ever, that corrupt patronage on which heretofore so much of the influence of government depended. With these views of the measure before the House, I earnestly implore honourable members, by their sense of justice to the country; by their respect of what is due to the people; by their regard for that glorious constitution which has been handed down to them from their ancestors—(great cheering from the Opposition)—I repeat," said the hon. member, raising his voice, and looking his opponents full in the face, "I repeat, that constitution which ministers are now endeavouring not to violate, but to amend; by their regard for the permanency of our institutions, and the peace and security of the state,—I call on them, by all these considerations—by their respect for the petitions of the people for what may be lawfully asked, and cannot be constitutionally refused—to support his majesty's ministers in their endeavour to uphold and cement the legitimate rights of the crown, the aristocracy, and the people; and by so doing, to fix the whole, as well as their own fame, on the imperishable basis of the affections of the people."

Mr. C. W. Wynn, the secretary at war, but without a seat in the cabinet, stated that unless the proposition of the noble lord underwent a modification greater than he had reason to expect, he could not give it his support.

On Tuesday, March 8th, Mr. O'Connell resumed the adjourned debate. We have already seen the effect produced by his eloquence on the Irish peasantry; it proved to be hardly less successful in the House of Commons. He played on the passions of that highly cul-

tivated assembly with the same ease and success as on those of his ignorant countrymen, now convulsing them with laughter, now almost melting them to tears, now firing them with indignation. On this occasion he gave the bill his most decided and anxious support, as a large, liberal, wise, and even generous measure. "There are, however," he added, "objections to the measure. I am, upon conviction, a radical reformer, and this is not a measure of radical reform. I am of opinion that, in every practicable mode, universal suffrage should be adopted as a matter of right; that the duration of parliaments should be shortened to the time stipulated in the glorious revolution of 1688; and, above all, that votes should be taken by ballot. As a radical reformer, I accept this measure heartily. But there is another point of view in which I have a right to object to it. It will not carry its own principle into effect in Ireland. I think Ireland has been badly treated by it. The measure is, however, too advantageous to be cavilled at, and this consideration makes me waive all paltry considerations to a measure which I believe will be highly advantageous to the people of England."

After dealing in detail and at great length with various objections which had been urged against the bill, the honourable member proceeded as follows:—

"The charge of inconsistency and of creating anomalies comes with a very bad grace from honourable gentlemen who contended for the beauty of that system which gave Gattos as many members as Westminster. The truth is, that the ancient system has been dilapidated and disfigured by those who now pretend to venerate it, and the government is endeavouring to build up again the old and simple fabric of the constitution. The gentlemen on the other side have in some cases destroyed the very foundations of that fabric, and have left no basis whereon a structure could be raised; but, wherever they have left even the ruins of the ancient edifice, the government has endeavoured to build up again on such remnants, scanty as they are, which have escaped the lawless hands of the spoliators. We have next been told that this bill is a corporation robbery, and we have had that assertion sounded in every tone except a low one, and every key except a minor key. But being a lawyer, and having a little of the curiosity which belongs to my profession, I have gone through the boroughs, with the view of ascertaining how many of them are corporations, and I have found that only sixteen out of sixty are so. Then, again, we have been told that this bill is a seizure of franchises and of the rights of the people. Now I should be glad to know if the gentlemen who hold

this language mean to assist me in my endeavours to carry the repeal of the Union. For if they think that the legislature has no right to take away franchises, what do they think of two hundred boroughs being disfranchised by one single Act of Parliament? Yet this was done by the Union. And were the voters tried and convicted? Oh no; so far from it, that forty of them were so innocent, that it was thought right to give £13,000 apiece of the public money to each of the forty. It was acknowledged that the people so disfranchised were innocent and guiltless, and I would ask the honourable member for Tamworth, who has called the present bill atrocious, and the noble lord who has called it iniquitous, whether they mean to join with me in repairing those acts of greater iniquity and greater atrocity which were committed at the time of the Union."

After dwelling at some length on the advantages which the bill would confer on Scotland, and at still greater length on the injustice with which, as he alleged, Ireland was treated, he thus concluded:—

"It is said that the system has worked well. I would ask you to inquire from your agricultural population whether such is the case—whether such a fact is reflected from the fires which lately blazed through the counties—and whether such would be the statement we should receive if we inquired from the unfortunate men who fill our gaols, on account of the late disturbances in the country. Does the Wilful Trespass Act, which gives the magistrates such dominion over the poor, evidence the well-working of the system? Are the game-laws a proof of such a fact? Has the House listened to the complaints of the people? I will give specimens to show how the boroughmongering representatives have voted upon questions of retrenchment, as an exemplification of the working of the close-borough system. From returns which have been made with regard to divisions on questions of retrenchment in 1822, it appears that of nineteen representatives for boroughs with a population under five hundred, all voted against retrenchment, that of the representatives of boroughs with a population over five hundred and not exceeding one thousand, twelve voted for retrenchment, and thirty-three against it; that of the representatives of boroughs with four thousand inhabitants, seventeen were for retrenchment, and forty-four against it; and that of the representatives of boroughs with a population beyond five thousand, sixty-six voted for retrenchment, and sixty-seven against it. ~~It~~ ^{It} was the boroughmongering parliament which saddled

the country with a debt of £800,000,000 or £900,000,000. It is said that the country has enjoyed prosperity under this system. True, it has; but why has it been prosperous? On account of its great resources, and in spite of the evil effects of the borough-mongering system. Is there a heart in a true British bosom that does not wish success to the brave and generous Poles? But if the despot of Russia should trample them in the dust, could this country interfere? No, for the debt at once prevents her from doing so. The aristocracy and their dependents have fattened upon the public plunder; and the consequence is, that the country is bound up in the manner I have described, and the only way for extricating it consists in calling the universal people of England around us. When I hear such triumphant assertions made as to the working well of the system, I would refer you to Ireland for the illustration. We have had a complete trial of it for thirty years at least, and yet Ireland is one of the most miserable countries on the earth, with wretchedness and starvation spreading desolation through the land. I call upon you, in the name of that God of charity whose spirit inhabits your bosoms, to do this great act of justice to Ireland, in the spirit in which it was intended, for the benefit of the people of England and of the people of Scotland; and by so doing to secure us against a revolution, the consequences of which no man can foretell."

Thus during seven nights did this debate drag on its weary length to a late hour of the 9th, or rather, an early hour of the 10th of March, when Lord J. Russell at length rose to reply. The number of those who had addressed the House in the course of this debate was seventy-one. Of these, thirty-four spoke in favour of the measure, and thirty-seven against it. Of the former, three sat for boroughs which the bill proposed to disfranchise, and two for boroughs which it deprived of one member. Of the thirty-seven adverse speakers, thirteen were members for boroughs which were to be entirely disfranchised, and seven for boroughs which were to be reduced to one representative. Lord J. Russell, in his reply, briefly and temperately answered some of the chief objections which had been urged against the measure. The Speaker then put the question, "That leave be given to bring in a bill to amend the representation of the people in England and Wales." This motion, in accordance with an understanding between the leaders on both sides of the House, was agreed to without a division. The ayes were shouted with a vehemence that made the old walls of St. Stephen's ring; while the noes proceeded from only three members; one of them was uttered in a loud and defiant tone, the other two

in a weak and dispirited manner, like faint echoes of the first. Leave was subsequently granted to introduce reform bills for Scotland and Ireland.

The plan thus brought forward was received by the radical party with delight, by the Whigs with doubt, by the Tories with terror. It surprised all; for though it did not come up to the wishes of the radicals—who desired the ballot, more frequent parliaments, and universal suffrage—it surpassed the expectations of all parties. By the great body of the people it was hailed with enthusiasm. From the moment of its first announcement they seemed to forget all the other measures which had been prayed for in their petition, and adopted the cry of “The bill, the whole bill, and nothing but the bill;” which they sustained under all the changes and vicissitudes it underwent, till it finally became the law of the land. On the other hand, the higher and better-educated classes generally regarded the measure with great alarm, as the commencement of the overthrow of all the established institutions of the country. They had not forgotten that, under the first French Revolution, the landed proprietors had been stripped of their property and driven into exile or put to death; and they dreaded that what they regarded as similar beginnings would lead to similar results.

It may seem strange that a change, which all men now admit to have been a great and necessary improvement, should have been resisted by the wealthy and educated few, and carried mainly through the exertions of the poor and uneducated multitude; but there is really nothing very surprising in this circumstance. The same may be said of almost every great improvement that has been effected in this or in any other country. The leaders of the movement have usually been men of rank and intelligence, and there have been found amongst their followers many men of liberal and highly cultivated minds—nay, sometimes, whole classes of such persons, on whom the existing abuses have pressed with unfair severity, may have joined them; yet, as a general rule, the rank and file of the army of progress has been composed of the classes which constituted the chief strength of the reform party. But perhaps this truth was never more strikingly exemplified than in the instance now before us; for if we would put our hands on the men who brought the reform struggle to its triumphant conclusion, we must not seek them in the ministry, “in the leading bankers, manufacturers, and tradesmen,” who in various parts of the kingdom petitioned for reform, but in the London mob, in the two or

three hundred thousand members of the Birmingham political union, in the determination of the great mass of the people in all parts of the kingdom, to march on London at the first signal given by their leaders; and if, on the other hand, we are asked to put our hands on the quarters from which the most formidable and pertinacious resistance to the bill proceeded, we must fix on the court, the clergy, the two universities, the inns of court, and the other ancient seats of learning. The true explanation of this seeming paradox is, that in political questions the belly is generally much more logical than the head. They who are well off deprecate change, because, if it does not bring with it peril to their fortune and position, it at least renders necessary efforts for the preservation of the one or the other, and that often of a character to which they are unaccustomed, and which perhaps they are unable or unwilling to put forth. But truth and right must ultimately prevail. The resistance thus offered may indeed defer the dreaded change, but cannot prevent its advent, and is certain to render it more violent when at last it does come. On the other hand, the very poor are the first to feel the evils which result from a vicious state of things, and their demand for the remedy is sure to cause its production, which they, guided by a blind but sure instinct, readily recognize and earnestly demand. And this is perhaps the true explanation of the old maxim, *Vox populi, vox Dei*; a maxim which certainly rests on a foundation of facts very far from contemptible. It is not, of course, meant to be asserted that everything the people clamour for ought to be granted, but it is a truth, confirmed in each case by the verdict of posterity, that they have almost invariably been right in their demands when they have generally and persistently supported any measure of alleged improvement. The opinion of the rabble, as they are sometimes called, is by no means to be despised; for it has often proved to be more correct than the judgment of men who have enjoyed a high reputation for statesmanship. Unquestionably, in the reform struggle the mob were right, and their learned, wealthy, and aristocratic opponents altogether mistaken.

The government, encouraged by the feeling in favour of the bill, manifested by an overwhelming and rapidly increasing majority of the people, gradually assumed a bolder attitude, and openly declared their intention not to consent to any serious modification of its provisions. In fact, there was now no drawing back. The nation was determined to be satisfied with nothing short of it; and if the government had faltered in their adhesion to it, ~~the~~ pre-

pared to go farther still would speedily have occupied their places. From the moment that the Reform Bill was proposed, there could be no safety for the country until it was carried. And the wisest course would have been to have allowed it to pass without exasperating the popular passions by protracted resistance. Many of those who thought the proposed change far too violent, justly deemed that the dangers of delay or rejection were far greater than any which could arise from the adoption of the measure. Others did not see this—indeed, from their education and habits of thought, could not see it—and continued to obstruct and delay the passage of the bill until it had become evident to almost all men, that the country was on the verge of revolution, and that concession was indispensable and inevitable.

Among the expedients to which reformers at this time had recourse, in order to insure the success of the bill, was the formation or extension of societies called political unions. These societies, which were established in all the chief towns of the empire, had a kind of military organisation, with the avowed design of “defending the king and his ministers against the boroughmongers,” a name which now began to be applied not only to those who trafficked in seats, but indiscriminately to all the opponents of the bill. The chairman of the Birmingham union publicly boasted that it would supply two armies, each of them as numerous and brave as that which had conquered at Waterloo, if the king and his ministers required them in their contest with the boroughmongers. Colonel Evans at a reform meeting held in London, stated that he had just arrived from the county of Sussex, where two reform meetings had been held, and he knew that ten thousand men were ready to march from Reigate, if the measure before the House should be defeated. Almost every town was paraded by large bodies of men, marching in procession with banners and bands of music, and in semi-military array. They were still tolerably good-humoured, for they were confident of speedy success. Though the whole country was at the mercy of these reform volunteers, no breach of the peace was committed, but threats were openly uttered, and it was evident that if the measure could not be carried by regular constitutional means, it would be carried by force. As for the poor anti-reformers, it was clear enough that they were not likely to take arms, and that the king and his ministers could not require the irregular assistance of these unions in order to resist them. The true object of those demonstrations was to strike terror into the hearts of the opponents of the bill, and to deter the govern-

ment and the king from faltering in their adherence to it. The latter accordingly regarded the political unions with great uneasiness; frequently urged his ministers to take measures for their suppression; and there can be no doubt that the terror which these organisations inspired caused him to waver in his support of the measure, and induced him to yield at several important crises of the struggle.

The press, as a whole, and the *Times* especially, rendered great assistance to the reform cause, by keeping alive the enthusiasm for the bill, by directing public opinion against its foremost opponents in and out of parliament, and terrifying the more timid of them into silence. Many newspapers which had hitherto supported the Tories now yielded to the torrent, and joined their opponents; others ceased to appear; many new journals and penny sheets came into existence, and largely contributed to swell the demand for reform, to which they owed their existence. The anti-reformers, on the other hand, started a few papers, and purchased others. Many of these were edited with great ability, but their circulation was almost confined to the small minority whose opinions they represented, and they had little or no success in their endeavours to stem the tide of popular feeling which was running so strongly in favour of the bill.

We have already mentioned the large number of public meetings that were held, and petitions sent up, in favour of parliamentary reform, while the character of the ministerial measure was yet a secret. These demonstrations became far more numerous after the provisions of the bill had been announced. On the other hand, meetings of a more private character, less numerous and less numerously attended, and petitions with fewer signatures, were diligently got up by the anti-reformers, to counteract, in some degree, the impression made by those in favour of the bill, and to encourage its parliamentary opponents in their resistance. These proceedings, however, only served to render yet more strikingly manifest the generality of the feeling in favour of reform, and the numerical weakness of the party by whom they were promoted.

Never, probably, in the whole previous history of this country, had the public feeling been so strongly and rapidly excited, as at the moment when the bill was brought before the House of Commons for a second reading. In every town of the empire, thousands each day were waiting with eagerness the arrival of the coach which brought down from London the reports of the parliamentary debates. They were read with the utmost avidity, every ardent

was warmly discussed in the streets, and in every public place to which newspapers came. Men who are accustomed to the calm and almost careless manner in which the proceedings of parliament are read in the present day, can hardly realize the fiery excitement with which they were expected and discussed during the debates on the Reform Bill. This excitement became more and more intense as the time approached when the great trial of strength was to take place between the supporters and opponents of the bill, on the division at the second reading, by which the general principle of the bill would be affirmed or rejected.

On the evening of the 21st of March, Lord J. Russell, without any preliminary observations, moved the second reading of the bill. He was followed by Sir R. Vyvian, member for the county of Cornwall, who moved that it should be read a second time that day six months, promising at the same time that if his motion should be adopted, he would follow it up by another, pledging the House to a bill of a more moderate character. His speech, like many others delivered on the same side of the House throughout the discussions on the bill, related much more to the first French Revolution than to the question of English parliamentary reform. His amendment was seconded by Mr. Cartwright, and a debate ensued, which was adjourned to the following evening. Both parties were thoroughly wearied with the preliminary skirmishing in which they had been so long engaged, and both were anxious to test their respective strength by a division. Accordingly, at the conclusion of the second night of the debate, the House divided, when the numbers were:—

For the amendment	...	...	...	...	...	301
For the second reading	...	...	...	...	...	302

Majority in favour of the second reading ... 1

This victory was in many respects worse than a defeat. It obliged the government to go on with the bill with a moral certainty that it would be so mutilated in committee as to render its abandonment necessary. And notice was given of a variety of motions calculated to interfere with the progress of the measure. One of the most plausible of these motions, and one that was subsequently conceded, was made by General Gascoyne, who moved that it was the opinion of the House that the total number of knights, citizens, and burgesses, returned to parliament for England and

Wales ought not to be diminished, on the plausible ground that it was desirable not to alter the relative proportion of members returned by the three kingdoms. As this was the first of the series of motions, the government, notwithstanding its apparently harmless character, determined to join issue upon it, and were defeated by a majority of eight. It was manifest that to prolong the struggle after this defeat would be a waste of time and energy, and would only serve to help the opposition in playing their game of delay. Ministers had already hinted that an adverse decision on this question would force them to appeal to the nation. It was now resolved that the appeal should be made at the first moment that the state of public business would allow.

Two great difficulties had to be overcome before this resolution could be carried out. In the first place, the king had distinctly intimated to his ministers on their accession to office, that he was not prepared to dissolve the newly elected parliament to enable them to carry their Reform Bill. They therefore had no right to claim the consent of the sovereign to a dissolution, and it was doubtful whether they could extort his consent to it by tendering their resignations. In the next place, the supplies were not yet passed, and many members who, though bitterly opposed to the ministerial measure, did not dare to vote against it, were ready to join the opponents of the bill in throwing impediments in the way of a dissolution. It was probably owing to the embarrassment thus produced that the ministers, on the evening after their defeat, abstained from giving any explanation of the course they intended to take. Nevertheless, rumours of an intended dissolution were very rife, and the matter was referred to in both Houses of Parliament on the evening of the 21st of April, but the ministers declined to state what their intentions were, only Lord Althorp announced that in consequence of the division on General Gascoyne's motion it was not the intention of the government to proceed further with the bill. An adjournment of the House was moved by Mr. Banks, on the ground that several other gentlemen wished to express their opinions on the subject, but for the real purpose of preventing the consideration of the supplies, and, as was hoped, thus rendering a dissolution impossible for the present, or at least, delaying the prorogation of parliament over the following afternoon, when, in accordance with a notice previously given, Lord Wharncliffe was to bring forward in the Upper House a motion for an address to the king, praying him to refuse his consent to a dissolution. It was hoped that the king, encouraged by this address, would refuse

to allow his ministers to dissolve; or would, at all events, urge them to avoid the necessity for a dissolution by making such concessions as the opposition devised to extort from them. Moved by these hopes and considerations, Mr. Banks pressed his motion to a division, and carried it by a majority of twenty-two.

The position of the ministers was now, highly critical. King, lords, and commons were more or less hostile to them. The old Tory party bitterly regretted that they had assisted the Whigs in overthrowing Wellington and Peel, and were ready to give their old leaders a steady support. The parliament had still six years to run, before the expiration of the legal terms of its existence, and it was hoped that during that time the duke might rally the Tory party, pass a bill transferring the franchises of a few corrupt boroughs to large towns, and so get rid of the Reform Bill and its authors.

Meanwhile, the question of a dissolution had been discussed in the cabinet, and had formed the subject of frequent letters between Earl Grey and the king, who had very reluctantly consented to it as a somewhat distant possibility. The necessity for a determination had now become urgent, and a decision must be come to at once. Mr. Banks's motion was carried on the morning of the 22nd. On the evening of the same day Lord Wharncliffe's address, which in the opinion of the chancellor would have rendered a dissolution, constitutionally impossible, was to be brought forward, and was sure to obtain the support of the majority of the peers. It must be anticipated. The dissolution must take place that very day, and the king, if possible, be persuaded to go down in person; for if the parliament were dissolved by commission, the motion might be passed, and though it would come too late to prevent the dissolution, it was feared that it would have a very prejudicial effect. But the same motives which induced the ministry to wish the king to go down and dissolve at once, led the anti-reformers, who filled the court, to strain every nerve to persuade the king to refuse, and he was not unlikely to lend a willing ear to their persuasions, and to object very strongly to carry out with such unusual precipitation a measure to which he had all along been opposed. Under these circumstances, Lord Grey with Lord Brougham, who by the king's directions accompanied the premier on all important occasions, waited on his majesty at half-past eleven o'clock on the morning of April 22nd, to urge him to go down and dissolve parliament that very afternoon.

Earl Grey, the pink and pattern of loyalty and chivalrous courtesy, shrunk from the disagreeable errand, and requested his

holder and less courtly colleague to introduce the subject, begging him at the same time to manage the susceptibility of the king as much as possible.

The chancellor accordingly approached the subject very carefully, prefacing the disagreeable message with which he was charged with a compliment on the king's desire to promote the welfare of his people. He then proceeded to communicate the advice of the cabinet, adding, that they were unanimous in offering it.

"What!" exclaimed the king, "would you have me dismiss in this summary manner a parliament which has granted me so splendid a civil list, and given my queen so liberal an annuity in case she survives me?"

"No doubt, sire," Lord Brougham replied, "in these respects they have acted wisely and honourably; but your majesty's advisers are all of opinion that, in the present state of affairs, every hour that this parliament continues to sit is pregnant with danger to the peace and security of your kingdom, and they humbly beseech your majesty to go down this very day and prorogue it. If you do not, they cannot be answerable for the consequences."

The king was greatly embarrassed: he evidently entertained the strongest objection to the proposed measure, but he also felt the danger which would result from the resignation of his ministers at the present crisis. He therefore shifted his ground, and asked, "Who is to carry the sword of state and the cap of maintenance?"

"Sire, knowing the urgency of the crisis and the imminent peril in which the country at this moment stands, we have ventured to direct those whose duty it is to perform these and other similar offices to hold themselves in readiness."

"But the troops, the Life-guards—I have given no orders for them to be called out, and now it is too late."

This was indeed a serious objection; for to call out the Guards was the special prerogative of the monarch himself, and no minister had any right to order their attendance without his express command.

"Sire," replied the chancellor, with some hesitation, "we must throw ourselves on your indulgence. Deeply feeling the gravity of the crisis, and knowing your love for your people, we have taken a liberty which nothing but the most imperious necessity could warrant; we have ordered out the troops, and we humbly throw ourselves on your majesty's indulgence."

The king's eye flashed and his cheek became crimson. He was evidently on the point of dismissing the ministry in an explosion of

anger. "Why, my lords," he exclaimed, "this is treason! *high treason*; and you, my lord chancellor, ought to know that it is."

"Yes, sire, I do know it: and nothing but the strongest conviction that your majesty's crown and the interests of the nation are at stake, could have induced us to take such a step, or to tender the advice we are now giving."

This submissive reply had the desired effect. The king cooled, his prudence and better genius prevailed; and having once made up his mind to yield, he yielded with a good grace.* He accepted, without any objection, the speech which had been prepared for him, and which the two ministers had brought with them; he gave orders respecting the details of the approaching ceremonial; and having completely recovered his habitual serenity and good-humour, he dismissed the two lords with a jocose threat of impeachment.

At half-past two o'clock the king entered his state carriage. It was remarked that the Guards on this occasion rode wide of it, as if they attended as a matter of state and ceremony, and not as being needed for the king's protection. Persons wishing to make a more open demonstration of their feelings were allowed to pass between the soldiers and approach the royal carriage. One of these, a rough sailor-like person, pulled off his hat, and waving it round his head, shouted lustily, "Turn out the rogues, your majesty!" Notwithstanding the suddenness with which the resolution to dissolve had been taken, the news had already spread through the metropolis, an immense crowd was assembled, and the king was greeted throughout his whole progress with the most enthusiastic shouts. These acclamations gratified his love of popularity, and helped to reconcile him to the step he had so reluctantly taken.

Meanwhile, another scene was being exhibited in the House of Lords. The chancellor on leaving the king went down to the House to hear appeals. Having gone through the cause-list he retired, hoping to prevent Lord Wharncliffe from bringing forward his motion. But the anti-reformers had mustered in great force, and the House was full in all parts. It is usual on the occasion of a prorogation by the sovereign, for the peers to appear in their robes, and most of those present wore theirs; but owing to the precipitation with which the dissolution had been decided on, several peers, especially on the opposition side of the House, had

* This story is told on the authority of Lord Brougham himself, by whom it was communicated to the author, and who, when the truth of it was questioned by Earl Grey, very honourably came forward and vouched for the correctness of the narration.

not been informed of it before they came down to the House, and consequently were in their ordinary clothes. A large number of peeresses in full dress, and of members of the House of Commons, were also present. And now a struggle commenced between the two parties into which the House was divided. The object of the opposition was to pass Lord Wharncliffe's motion before the king's arrival; that of the supporters of the ministry was to prevent it from being passed. The firing of the park guns announced that the king was already on his way to the House, and told the opposition they had no time to lose. On the motion of Lord Mansfield, the Earl of Shaftesbury presided, in the absence of the lord chancellor.

The Duke of Richmond, in order to baffle the opposition, moved that the standing order which required their lordships to take their places according to their rank should be enforced. The opposition saw at once that this motion was made for the sake of delay, and angrily protested against it; whereupon the duke threatened to call for the enforcement of two other standing orders, which prohibited the use of intemperate and threatening language in the House. Lord Londonderry, furious with indignation, broke out into a vehement tirade against the conduct of the ministry, and thus effectually played the game of his opponents. So violent was the excitement, that the ladies present were terrified, thinking that the peers would actually come to blows. At length Lord Londonderry was persuaded to sit down, and Lord Wharncliffe obtained a hearing. But it was too late to press his motion, and he contented himself with reading it, in order that it might be entered on the journals of the House. At this conjuncture the lord chancellor returned, and exclaimed, in a vehement and emphatic tone, "My lords, I have never yet heard it doubted that the king possessed the prerogative of dissolving parliament at pleasure, still less have I ever known a doubt to exist on the subject at a moment when the Lower House have thought fit to refuse the supplies." He had scarcely uttered these words when he was summoned to meet the king, who had just arrived and was in the robing-room; he at once quitted the House, which resounded on all sides with cries of "hear" and "the king."

This tumult having in some degree subsided, Lord Mansfield addressed the House, regretting the scene which had just occurred, and condemning the dissolution, which he qualified as an act by which the ministers were making the sovereign the instrument of his own destruction.

He was interrupted by another storm of violence and confusion, which was at length appeased by the announcement that the king

was at hand. When he entered, the assembly had recovered its usual calm and decorous tranquillity. The members of the House of Commons having been summoned to the bar, the king, in a loud and firm voice, pronounced his speech, which commenced with the following words:—

“My lords and gentlemen, I have come to meet you for the purpose of proroguing this parliament, with a view to its immediate dissolution.

“I have been induced to resort to this measure for the purpose of ascertaining the sense of my people, in the way in which it can be most constitutionally and authentically expressed, on the expediency of making such changes in the representation as circumstances may appear to require, and which, founded on the acknowledged principles of the constitution, may tend at once to uphold the just rights and prerogatives of the crown, and to give security to the liberties of the people.”

While the House of Lords was agitated in the manner we have just described, a scene of scarcely less violence was occurring in the House of Commons. As the approaching dissolution had become pretty generally known, the House was crowded with members at half-past two o'clock, when the speaker, attired in his state robes, took the chair.

Mr. Hodges rose to present a petition from Hythe, in the county of Kent, in favour of parliamentary reform.

On the question being put, that the petition be now read, Sir R. Vyvian rose and made a long rambling speech, in which he asserted that the country was on the eve of a revolution, denounced the Reform Bill, censured the ministers, and especially condemned their resolution to dissolve; and at length exclaimed, “The question before the House is whether we shall be dissolved or not, because we have voted that the number of the English representatives shall not be reduced.”

Sir F. Burdett called him to order: the speaker decided that he was in order nevertheless.

Mr. Tennyson endeavoured, amidst indescribable uproar, to address the House, in support of Sir F. Burdett's call to order.

The speaker again rose and said, “This is not a question of order, as to whether an honourable member is to confine himself to the matter contained within the four corners of a petition, but whether the general scope and tenour of his speech has or has not reference to the subject-matter of the petition, that subject-matter being parliamentary reform.”

Mr. Tennyson: "I entirely agree with what has fallen from the speaker, who has drawn the line very clearly. But I will contend, that the course taken by the honourable baronet is disorderly; and, even though the speaker should gainsay it, I will maintain that the honourable baronet is out of order." Here the honourable member was interrupted by tremendous shouts of "chair." "It is, I repeat, most disorderly and most unconstitutional for any honourable member of this House, be he who he may, to discuss before the House of Commons the question whether parliament should be dissolved or not." The cries of "chair" were again repeated in the same tumultuous manner as before.

At length Sir R. Vyvian was enabled to continue his speech, and was still proceeding in a very excited strain, when the report of the first piece of artillery announced the approach of the king. It was received by the ministerial party with triumphant cheers and loud laughter, and cries of "The king!" "The king!" Each successive discharge increased the excitement and enthusiasm that prevailed within the House.

Sir F. Burdett and Sir R. Peel rose at the same moment, but the speaker decided that the latter had possession of the House. Having given his decision, he farther observed, "When honourable members call upon me to decide on questions of order, and I have endeavoured to give my opinion impartially, it is not perfectly consistent with the respect due to the chair to proceed farther with the matter."

Sir R. Peel then began to address the House, which was now boiling with excitement; he himself too, for the first and perhaps the only time in his parliamentary career, was carried away by strong irritation, which strikingly contrasted with his usual self-possessed and impassive demeanour. An eye-witness of the scene told the author that he had never seen a man in such a passion in his life. While he was speaking amidst indescribable tumult, the sergeant-at-arms knocked at the door of the House, and summoned the Commons to attend the House of Peers. On the following day parliament was dissolved by proclamation.

CHAPTER III.

SECOND INTRODUCTION OF THE REFORM BILL.

THE dissolution of the parliament was a signal for general rejoicing. It was celebrated by illuminations throughout the country. In London, the Lord Mayor, finding that he could not prevent the demonstration, wisely put himself at the head of it, and issued a notice regulating the manner in which it was to be carried out. Some evil-disposed person caused another notice to be printed and posted, purporting to emanate from the chief magistrate, in which it was stated that the protection of the police would not be afforded to those who refused to illuminate. Fortunately, little or no mischief resulted from this forgery. Almost every house in the city was lighted up, and in the few exceptions that occurred little damage was done by the mob. At the West End, however, the houses of several leading anti-reformers, who naturally refused to illuminate, were attacked and their windows demolished, especially those of the Duke of Wellington and Mr. Baring.

And now the election struggle commenced—the last that took place under the old system, which allowed the poll to be kept open for fourteen days, during the whole or a part of which drunkenness, rioting, bribery, and every kind of excess prevailed. On this occasion, the cry of “The bill, the whole bill, and nothing but the bill,” rang from one extremity of the country to the other. The one question put to all candidates was, “Will you support or oppose the bill?” The nation was now thoroughly aroused; and there could be no doubt in the mind of any impartial person that nine-tenths of the population were zealously and enthusiastically in favour of the measure, and firmly resolved to put forth every effort to secure its success. But the other tenth—composed, as we have seen, of the great majority of the educated and moneyed classes,

and of those under their influence—were determined to strain every nerve in order to defeat it. By each party large sums of money were subscribed to defray the enormous expense of the contests. Bribery and improper influence were resorted to on both sides, but chiefly on that which had most to spend and most to lose. On the other side, popular violence and intimidation were too often resorted to. A society called the Parliamentary Candidate Society interfered everywhere, by recommending candidates supposed to be favourable to the bill, and denouncing others who were believed to be opposed to it.

The boroughs destined to be disfranchised by the bill, or rather their proprietors, with a few honourable exceptions, returned men resolved to defend their franchises. But in the great towns, and in all places in which the election really rested with any large portion of the inhabitants, the public opinion in favour of the bill prevailed. In England alone upwards of one hundred of those who voted against ministers on one or both of the two great divisions on the Reform Bill ceased to sit in the House of Commons, and made way for thorough-going supporters of "the bill, the whole bill, and nothing but the bill." The anti-reformers obtained a few isolated triumphs, to console them in some degree for these numerous defeats. Of the eighty-two county members for England, all—with the exception of about half a dozen representatives of some of the smallest—were pledged to the bill. In Ireland and Scotland the elections in the counties and open boroughs were equally favourable to the cause of reform. In the latter country that cause was disgraced by the ruffianly violence of some of its partisans.

Never perhaps had any election worked so complete a transformation. The reformers were now an overwhelming majority. The survivors of the great party which had carried General Gascoyne's motion came back a beaten and dispirited minority, but resolved to strain every nerve to modify, if not defeat, a measure which they expected to overthrow the institutions of the country, and effect their own political annihilation.

On Tuesday, June 21st, the parliament was opened by the king in person. The intervening days had been spent in swearing in the members and other customary preliminaries. The king went down to the House of Lords in the usual state. He was received with the wildest enthusiasm, not only by the populace, who attended in immense numbers along the line of procession, but also within the walls of parliament by a well-dressed and fashionable crowd, which thronged the painted chambers and the lobbies through

which his majesty passed on his way to the robing-room, and thence to the House of Lords. The speech which he delivered on this occasion contained the following reference to the great question which engrossed the public attention:—"My lords and gentlemen, I have availed myself of the earliest opportunity of resorting to your advice and assistance after the dissolution of parliament. Having had recourse to that measure for the purpose of ascertaining the sense of my people on the expediency of a reform in the representation, I have now to recommend that question to your earliest and most attentive consideration, confident that in any measure which you may propose for its adjustment you will carefully adhere to the acknowledged principles of the constitution by which the prerogatives of the crown, the authority of both Houses of Parliament, and the rights and liberties of the subject are equally secured."

The answer to the address was couched in terms calculated to disarm opposition, and was agreed to in both Houses after a good deal of desultory and unimportant discussion.

On June 24th the bill, in which a few changes had been made, was again introduced by Lord J. Russell. His bearing and manner on this occasion were very different from what they had been when he introduced the first bill. Then he evidently felt that he was addressing an assembly filled with hollow supporters or determined opponents. His tone, therefore, was deprecatory, almost suppliant. It was evident on the present occasion that he saw that the game was in his hands—that he felt certain not only of the House of Commons, but—what was more—of the nation. His bearing betokened the confidence which this feeling inspired; and when he turned to his opponents, he spoke to them in tones of warning and almost of menace.

On the 4th of July the question of the second reading was brought forward. Notwithstanding the thoroughness with which it had already been discussed, the interest taken in it by the members of the House, as evidenced by their attendance, had by no means diminished. Some of them had come down to the House at seven in the morning, while it was being swept, and had affixed to the seats they wished to secure cards bearing their own names or those of their friends. Mr Hume, who arrived punctually at ten in the morning, the hour to which it had been adjourned, found some two or three hundred seats already ticketed, and among the rest that which he usually occupied. Thereupon, he complained to the speaker; who could only recommend "a spirit of general courtesy

and accommodation on the part of the members." This debate, deeply interesting as it was to the excited hearers and readers of that time, is totally devoid of interest to the readers of the present day. Every argument that could be urged on either side of the great question had already been advanced. The discussion was carried on through three nights, until about five o'clock on the morning of Thursday, the 7th of July, when there was a division, which strikingly exhibited the change that the composition of the House had undergone and the gain to the ministerial party, for the majority of one was now changed into a majority of 136; the numbers being—for the second reading 367, against 231, thus showing a ministerial gain of 135. It was remarked that the minority which voted against the measure equalled in numbers, as nearly as possible, the members returned by the boroughs which the bill proposed to disfranchise. A correspondent of the *Times*, under the signature of "Radical," went through the whole list of the minority, endeavouring to show that, whatever might be the motives of their opposition to the bill, every one of them had a direct personal interest to serve in opposing it.

There was small rest that morning for Mr. Attorney-General, his colleagues were all going homewards to their comfortable beds on the dawning daylight of the 7th of July, but he had to make his appearance at an early hour of the same morning at the Guildhall, in order to prefer an indictment against the notorious William Cobbett, charging him with publishing, on the 11th of December last, a libel, with the intent to raise discontent in the minds of the labourers in husbandry, to incite them to acts of violence, and to destroy corn, machinery, and other property.

The present generation have nearly forgotten this extraordinary man, who in the beginning of this century, and particularly during the period which elapsed between the battle of Waterloo and the introduction of the Reform Bill, exercised a most powerful influence over the minds of the working classes of England, especially in reference to the question of reform, which by his writings and lectures he had done more than any other man in England to promote, though the violence of his language had made many enemies both to himself and the cause which he advocated. Born in a very humble position, and originally an unlettered private in the army, he had become by his own almost unaided efforts, one of the greatest masters of the English language that any age has produced. His pure, vigorous, racy, masculine Saxon, while it delighted the man of taste, was intelligible to the meanest capacity; and the violence of

his language and the exaggeration of his opinions, of which we shall presently have a specimen, were highly acceptable to the more uneducated portion of his admirers. He was, moreover, one of the most prolific writers that ever lived; a man of untiring energy, a good lover, but a better hater; bold, ardent, and uncompromising. Like most men of a very inflammable temperament, he was extremely intolerant, and almost unable to believe in the sincerity of any man whose views and opinions did not square exactly with his own. He often loaded those from whom he differed with the most unsparing abuse; and sometimes he attacked with the greatest asperity persons who had been his political associates and the objects of his warm eulogiums, for some trifling offence or difference of opinion. He was remarkably temperate, and abstained from intoxicating drinks at a time when such abstinence was most unusual. His personal appearance was commanding. He was tall and erect, and the dress of an old English country gentleman of his day, which he usually wore, set off his person to great advantage. His speech, like his writings, was plain, forcible, and emphatic. Such was the man whom the government determined to prosecute. They were anxious to show that, while they defied the violence of those who would not go far enough, they were determined to repress the violence of those who went too far, and to prove that, while resolved to effect needful reforms, they were prepared to do more for the maintenance of public order than the feeble administrations which had preceded them. These motives, however, would probably not have induced them to embark in this impolitic prosecution, if they had not been urged to it by the king himself, who was much alarmed at the language and influence of Cobbett.

Cobbett, in his *Weekly Register*, had given notice of the day of trial; and when he entered the court, the gallery, which was open to the public, was already crowded, chiefly by his admirers. On his entrance he was greeted by clapping of hands, which was followed by three loud rounds of cheering. These tokens of sympathy he acknowledged with evident satisfaction, and, addressing himself to his supporters, he exclaimed: "If truth prevails, we shall beat them."

The article for which he was indicted was one that had appeared in his *Political Register*, and contained the following passages:—

"But without entering at present into the motives of the working people, it is unquestionable that their acts have produced good, and great good too. They have been always told, and they are told now, and by the very parson I have quoted above, that their acts

of violence and particularly their burnings, can do them no good, but add to their wants by destroying the food they would have to eat. Alas, they know better! They know that one threshing machine takes wages from ten men; and they also know that they should have none of this food, and that potatoes and salt do not burn! Therefore, this argument is not worth a straw. Besides, they see and feel that the good comes, and comes instantly too. They see that they get some bread in consequence of the destruction of part of the corn; and while they see this, you attempt in vain to persuade them that that which they do is wrong. And as to one object, that of making the parsons reduce their tithes—it is hailed as a good by ninety-nine hundredths, even of men of considerable property; while there is not a single man in the country who does not clearly trace the reduction to the acts of the labourers, and especially to these fires; for it is the terror of these, and not the bodily force, which has prevailed.

“All men, except the infamous stock-jobbing race, say, and loudly say, that their object is just; that they ought to have that they are striving for; and all men, except that same hellish crew, say that they had no other means of obtaining it.”

The attorney-general urged, that the tendency of these passages was to excite the suffering people to a repetition of their crime. He treated Cobbett with much courtesy, speaking of him as “one of the greatest masters of the English language who had ever composed in it.”

Cobbett, who was his own advocate, was not disarmed by the moderation or the compliments of his accuser. Not content with defending himself, he hurled wrath and defiance against his prosecutors, and especially the attorney-general. Indeed, his object seemed rather to be to assail the ministry than to defend himself; and he appeared to revel in the opportunity afforded him of pouring out the vials of his indignation upon them.

He said that the Tories had ruled the country with rods, but that the Whigs scourged it with scorpions; and he concluded a very long speech by the following declaration:—

“Whatever may be the verdict of the jury, if I am doomed to spend my last breath in a dungeon, I will pray to God to bless my country; I will curse the Whigs, and leave my revenge to my children and the labourers of England.”

His address was frequently interrupted by applause from the gallery; and when he sat down, he was long and loudly cheered, in spite of the efforts of the officers of the court.

His first witness was Lord Brougham, who was summoned to prove that he had recently requested the publication of a paper by Mr. Cobbett, addressed to the Luddites, dissuading them from breaking machinery. Lord Brougham admitted that such was the case, but explained that the paper had not been published; on account of some objectionable expressions it contained, and which Mr. Cobbett would not consent to remove. Lords Grey, Melbourne, and Durham had also been subpoenaed, and appeared on the bench; but Lord Chief Justice Tenterden, the presiding judge, who throughout the proceedings had treated the defendant with marked courtesy, having decided that the questions that Cobbett wished to put to them were inadmissible, he intimated that he would not detain them, and they withdrew. The jury, not being able to agree in their verdict, after having been locked up for fifteen hours, were discharged. Ten of them were for a conviction, and two for an acquittal.

About this time papers were laid before parliament which exhibited in a very striking manner the injustice and anomalies of the system which the Reform Bill proposed to abolish. From these papers it appeared that the boroughs of Beccalston, Bossiny, and St. Maw's, each contained only one 10^l. householder; Dunwich, Bedwin, and Castle Rising, two; Aldborough, three; Ludgershall, four; Bletchingly, five; West Looe and St. Michael's, eight. Of the boroughs in Schedule B, Amersham would have twenty-five; East Grinstead and Okehampton, forty-two, each; Ashburton, fifty-four.* On the other hand it was shown that the large boroughs which were retained would have fewer voters under the proposed than under the old system, and that the constituencies of the new boroughs would not be unmanageably numerous. Thus, that of Preston would be reduced from several thousands to 976; Birmingham would have 6,532; Manchester, 12,639; Leeds, 6,683. Other returns presented striking contrasts between the revenues derived from the disfranchised and enfranchised boroughs. Thus, Beccalston paid in assessed taxes £3 9s.; Bramber, £16 8s. 9d.; Bishop's Castle, £40 17s. 1d.; while Marylebone paid £290,376 3s. 9d.; Tower Hamlets, £118,546; Finsbury, £205,948; Lambeth, £108,841; Leeds, £18,800; Manchester, £40,094; Birmingham, £26,986; Greenwich, £21,341.

It was evident that the only hope for the opposition was in

* It was intended that the boroughs in this schedule should have their constituency made up to at least three hundred by the annexation of adjoining districts.

delay. Accordingly, when it was moved that the speaker do now leave the chair in order to go into committee, Lord Maitland, the member for Appleby, urged that there was a mistake in the population return of his borough, and moved that his constituents be heard in person or by counsel at the bar of the House. Lord J. Russell admitted the statement of the petitioner, that there had been a mistake, but thought that the present was an improper time to argue the case, and the House supported his opinion by a majority of 97. Still the question, that the speaker do now leave the chair, was before the House, and this question was met by the opposition by ten successive motions for adjournment, on each of which a debate and a division took place. At length both parties agreed to go into committee *pro forma*, and the House adjourned at half-past seven o'clock in the morning, to meet again at three o'clock on the following afternoon.

Thus the bill had at length got into committee with a majority able and determined to carry it through unimpaired, but with a minority equally resolved to dispute the ground inch by inch, and, if not to defeat, at all events to delay to the very latest possible moment, the passing of the hated measure. They went on week after week quibbling, wrangling, disputing, and speaking against time. Each separate borough was warmly and unscrupulously defended, sometimes two or three times over. The speakers eulogised the purity of its electors, argued that its peculiar franchises formed an essential part of the British constitution, gave lists of the eminent men who had represented it; and when all such topics were exhausted, they rang—over and over again—the changes on anarchy, revolution, and military despotism. To give an account of debates in which every sentence and almost every syllable of the bill was subjected to every imaginable criticism and the work of two or three weeks spread over as many months would be absurd. All that can be attempted is to furnish a general idea of the course which the discussion took, and to recount, here and there, some incident illustrating the state of popular feeling, or which, for some other reason, seems noteworthy. The House was chiefly occupied on the evening of July 13th with the proposal of Mr. Wynn, that the enfranchising clauses should be considered first, in order that the number of places to be enfranchised being previously settled, the House might gain the required number of seats, and avoid disfranchisement by uniting small boroughs. After a long debate, the proposition was negatived by a majority of 118. On the following evening, July 14th, Sir Robert Peel proposed the omission of the

word "each" in the first clause, which enacted that each of the boroughs enumerated in Schedule A should cease to return any member or members to parliament, under the consideration of the House. The adoption of his motion would have had the effect of destroying the sense of the clause, and thus either getting rid of it altogether, or necessitating the substitution of a fresh clause. It was of course rejected; but a whole evening had been spent in discussing it, and reformers out of doors saw with apprehension and regret that the majority on this occasion had decreased to 97—not from the defection of reformers but from their absence. The tactics of the anti-reformers were clearly succeeding to a certain extent, and the friends of the bill out of doors began to manifest great impatience and alarm.

These feelings found vent in a manner which displays the prevailing spirit. It has been already mentioned that, on the night of divisions, Lord Maitland, who represented the borough of Appleby, asserted that it had been placed in Schedule A through a mistake in the population returns of 1821, which had been taken as the basis of the bill, and moved that his constituents should be heard at the bar of the House against the Reform Bill, so far as it affected their interests, and in support of the allegations contained in a petition which they had sent. Among those who spoke and voted in favour of the motion was Alderman Thompson, reforming member for the city of London, who was "intimately acquainted" with Appleby, and thought that the population was sufficiently large to take it out of the list of proscribed boroughs. His constituents regarded a voto with the anti-reformers as an act of treason against the reform party. A public meeting of the livery of London—at that time a much more numerous and important body than it is now—was called, and he appeared before it. He received severe rebukes from several speakers, and was distinctly told that he was sent to parliament to support the bill in all its parts and stages. After listening very meekly to these lectures, he expressed his contrition, and pleaded that such a prostration of body and mind had seized him, owing to the fatigue arising from his close attendance at the House of Commons, that he had committed an "inadvertence," and in order to avoid similar mistakes in future he would vote against every proposed alteration of the bill that was not sanctioned by the government. The meeting, appeased by his protestations and promises, administered some further admonitions, which were received with due submission, and concluded by passing the following resolution: "That the meeting of the livery of London, after a

full and complete inquiry into the vote of Mr. Alderman Thompson relative to the borough of Appleby, and his explanation of the same, are of opinion that he acted therein inadvertently, and Mr. Alderman Thompson having renewed his pledge to give entire support to the Reform Bill, this meeting feel themselves called upon to continue their confidence in Mr. Alderman Thompson as one of the representatives of the city of London in parliament." The *Times* and reformers generally thought such a spirit as had been displayed on this occasion highly creditable to the people. Anti-reformers, as the reader will easily conceive, thought much otherwise, and took care that neither the House nor the worthy alderman should soon forget the inadvertence that had been committed, or the severity with which it had been rebuked.

On the 19th, the next day on which the committee sat, the House was brought back to a general question, by the following motion from Mr. Mackinnon, member for Lymington: "That it be an instruction to the committee, that the boroughs inserted in Schedules A and B (that is to say, the boroughs that were to be either entirely or partially disfranchised) be considered with regard to their population from the last census, and not from that taken in 1821, as proposed in the bill." As the census would not be ready to be laid on the table of the House for some time, it was clear that the adoption of this motion would cause great delay, and render necessary a reconstruction of some of the most important clauses of the bill; but it afforded some boroughs a prospect of escape from disfranchisement; it therefore attracted a good deal of public attention, and many reformers were disposed to support it.

Mr. Mackinnon's proposition was rejected by a majority of seventy-five—the smallest majority in favour of any leading provision of the ministerial bill throughout the whole progress of the struggle in the House of Commons. It was subsequently adopted by ministers themselves, and the measure which became law was based on the census of 1831.

The real business of the committee now fairly began, but did not go forward very rapidly. The whole evening was spent in a second wrangle over the borough of Appleby, which was at length condemned to political extinction by a majority of seventy-four.

On the following evening the progress was somewhat more rapid; twelve boroughs were doomed to parliamentary extinction, notwithstanding all the efforts of the opposition to delay their fate. This rate of proceeding, however, did not by any means satisfy the

impatience of reformers out of doors. They were beginning to complain of the forbearance and courtesy with which the opponents of the bill were treated by ministers, and to ask such questions as, "Why not (as Mr. Hobhouse has already proposed) meet at ten o'clock in the morning?" "Why not force the disfranchisement of nomination boroughs in the lump, instead of strangling the reptiles by the tedious and troublesome process of succession?" To all which questions ministers, heartily weary of the length to which the discussion had already gone, and contemplating with dismay the almost endless floods of talk that lay in prospect before them, lent a not inattentive or unwilling ear. On the 21st of July, the chancellor of the exchequer came forward with a plan, of which he had given notice the previous evening, "to enable the House to make a more expeditious progress with the Reform Bill." He proposed that the order of the day for the House resolving itself into a committee on the Reform Bill should precede all public business, and that the House should sit on Saturdays for the reception of petitions.

It was eventually agreed that the House should go into committee on the bill daily at five o'clock. Other business intervened, and it was late on this evening before the Reform Bill came before the House. However, some progress was made. Downton, Dunwich, Eyc, Fowey, Gatton, and Haslemere were all disfranchised; and the speaker, at the conclusion of the sitting, announced that, in accordance with what appeared to be the wish of the House, he would take the chair at three o'clock, whenever the attendance of members enabled him to do so. The only earnest contest took place in the case of the borough of Downton, which had not, in the first instance, been marked out for disfranchisement, and which had a population considerably exceeding 2000, but which had been placed in Schedule A at the suggestion of the patron, Lord Radnor, on the ground of the smallness of its constituency, and of its being a nomination borough. Lord J. Russell, after stating these circumstances, added, that the borough might be allowed to retain its right of sending a member without violation of any principle of the bill, and left the House to decide freely on its fate. Thus encouraged, Mr. Croker proposed its removal from Schedule A; and after considerable discussion, its retention in that clause was decided by a majority of 30 only, there being 244 for the motion, and 274 against it.

On the following day the new arrangement was carried out. At five o'clock the House went into committee on the Reform Bill, and continued, till about two o'clock, when it proceeded to the other

orders of the day, which were very speedily disposed of. The first experience of the working of the new plan was highly satisfactory, as eighteen more boroughs were disfranchised.

But reformers outside, though glad to see this improvement, desired still greater rapidity. They complained that, after a discussion extending over several weeks, the *first* clause had not yet been disposed of, and there were sixty more, and the House of Lords after all. The division lists were carefully scanned, and absentees on the reforming side admonished to be at their posts, if they wished to preserve the favour and support of their constituents. On the other hand, the Tories, delighted at these delays, were beginning to recover hope, and uttered very confident predictions that the bill would never be carried. Their vaunts increased the uneasiness and alarm of the reformers, and meetings began to be held in all parts of the country, for the purpose of petitioning the Commons to proceed with the measure more rapidly. Coventry took the lead in this movement, and in ten hours its petition, praying the House to proceed more rapidly, received 3400 signatures.

These efforts were not altogether ineffectual. On the night of the 26th the remaining boroughs of Schedule A were disposed of, with the exception of Saltash, which was feebly condemned by the chancellor of the exchequer, defended by Lord J. Russell, and saved from disfranchisement by a majority of eighty-one. The borough of St. Germain's was less fortunate. In this case the population of the town was considerably below 2000, but that of the parish to which it belonged was above that number. In the first bill it had been placed in Schedule B; it was now removed into Schedule A, because it was found that there were only thirteen houses in the town and parish that were assessed at £10 and upwards. Mr. Ross moved that it should be reinstated in the position which it had originally occupied; but he, and a host of others who followed on the same side, failed to convince ministers; and after a long discussion the proposal to preserve its franchise was negatived by a majority of forty-eight.

At length, on the evening of July 27th, the committee reached the second clause of the bill, which enacted that for the future the boroughs named in Schedule B should return one member to serve in Parliament. Sir Robert Peel at once rose, and proposed that the word *two* should be substituted for the word *one*. In contending for this change he strongly urged that the agricultural interest was very unfairly dealt with by the bill.

The amendment was earnestly opposed by Lord J. Russell, and rejected by a majority of sixty-seven.

Notwithstanding this adverse decision of the House on the general question, the opposition strenuously and at great length defended each separate borough, and after each successive defeat again renewed the hopeless struggle with the same dogged and invincible obstinacy. Aldborough came first. Mr. Duncome, who denominated it a rotten and stinking borough, proposed that it should be sent back to Schedule A, or, in other words, entirely disfranchised. He was eventually persuaded to withdraw his motion. The borough of Ashburton came next. Its two reforming members, Colonel Torrens and Mr. Poyntz, tried hard to avert its fate, but failed to convince the ministry or the House. An attempt to obtain an inquiry into the amount of the population of Chippenham, on the ground that there was a serious error in the population returns of the census of 1821 for that place, was equally unsuccessful. Eight boroughs, being a fifth part of the whole number designated by the bill for semi-disfranchisement, were disposed of this evening, and on the following evening six more. Never were procrastination and delay so systematically organised, or carried to such a pitch of perfection, as in these discussions. There was a regular division of labour in the work of obstruction, which was arranged and superintended by a committee, of which Sir R. Peel was the president.* Each borough had its own band of defenders, whose business was not so much to endeavour to save it—for of that there was no hope—but to consume time in advocating its retention. And in order to promote delay, the leaders of the opposition stood up again and again every night, repeating the same stale statements and arguments, and often in almost the same words. The *Spectator* computed the number of speeches which had been delivered in committee between the 12th and 27th of July, by some of the leading anti-reformers, and found that Sugden had spoken eighteen times, Praed twenty-two times, Pelham twenty-eight times, Peel forty-eight times, Croker fifty-seven times, and Wetherell fifty-eight times. It is needless to say that the greater part of these speeches were inexpressibly wearisome. Ministers, condemned to sit and listen, and sometimes to reply, were taunted by their opponents for not answering their stale arguments, and rated by their friends out of doors for their mildness, courtesy, and forbearance. These reproaches were undeserved, for they were really doing their very best to push the measure forwards; but their

* In justice to Sir R. Peel, it should be observed, that his opposition was much less vexatious than that of most of those with whom he was

opponents were men who, knowing the facilities which the forms of Parliament afforded for vexatious delay, were determined to take advantage of them to the very uttermost. We have an instance of this on July 29th, when more than two hours were spent in higgling with the opposition for a sitting on the day following (Saturday, July 30). The thermometer at this time was ranging from 75° to 80°, and eight hours of each evening were given to the Reform Bill alone, besides the time spent in other business. Ministers as usual carried their point on a division; but the hours consumed in this unprofitable discussion nearly counterbalanced the gain. However, on this evening, the rest of the boroughs in Schedule B were disposed of according to the intentions of the government, with the exception of two, Sudbury and Totnes, which were postponed until the next meeting of the House, on the 2nd of August—the 1st of that month being the day appointed for the solemn opening of London Bridge by the king in person.

Thus the anti-reformers went on night after night, protracting the struggle by every possible artifice, suffering defeat after defeat, unchequered by any gleam of success except the one solitary triumph achieved by the Marquis of Chandos, who carried an amendment, the object of which was, to give a vote to any farmer occupying land on his own account at a rent of not less than £50 per annum, without any specific tenure.

On the 8th of September, the coronation was performed as usual, but the cost was greatly reduced, and the ceremony shorn of much ancient pomp and time-honoured absurdity.

Although the Reform Bill had now passed through the committee, the contest was not ended, nor the resources of obstruction and delay exhausted. On Tuesday the 13th of September, Lord J. Russell brought up the report, and called the attention of the House to one or two alterations he proposed to make in the measure. The consideration of the report occupied the House during the evenings of Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, with no other result than that Derbyshire, Carnarvonshire, Ashton-under-Lyne, and Stroud in Gloucestershire, with which last borough Minchin-hampton was incorporated, each gained a member.

At last, on the evening of September 19th, the third reading of the bill came on; and in order that every man might be at his post, a call of the House was proposed but not enforced. The attendance was by no means large. After the presentation of petitions, and some other routine business, Lord J. Russell moved that the order of the day be read for the third reading of the Reform Bill.

This having been done accordingly, he rose again and said, "I move that the bill be read a third time."

The anti-reformers expected a long discussion on this motion, and very few of them were in their places. Sir J. Scarlett, the only leading member of the opposition present, attempted to speak against time, but quailed before the vehement shouts of "divide" with which he was met, and, after persisting for a few minutes, during which his voice was drowned by the clamour, he gave way, and the House divided, when the numbers were—

For the third reading	.	...	...	...	...	113
Against	...	...	...	...	...	58
Majority	...	..	..	...	...	55

These numbers sufficiently indicate that both sides of the House had been taken by surprise, and no sooner were the doors reopened after the division, than the members who had been shut out came flocking in. Among them were Sir R. Peel and Sir C. Wetherell, who were received by the exulting majority with peals of derisive laughter, which lasted for some minutes. It was the first time the majority had fairly stolen a march on their opponents, and they were naturally not a little triumphant.

After the discussion of a rider, providing against the contingency of the king's decease before the bill could come into operation, and the consideration and adoption of some unimportant ministerial amendments, Lord J. Russell once more rose, and said, "Sir, I now move that this bill do pass." The opposition was now in full force; and so the motion thus laconically proposed was followed by a discussion extending over the evenings of the 19th, 20th, and 21st of September. At length, at five o'clock in the morning of the 22nd of September, the House divided for the last time, when the numbers were—

For the question that the bill do now pass	...	...	315
Against	..	...	239
Majority	...	...	106

Thus at length the measure, on which the House of Commons had been almost continuously engaged during nearly three months of extraordinary labour and unusually protracted sittings, passed. And now the eyes of all men were turned towards the Upper House. They had long been inquiring, and were every day asking more anxiously as the critical moment approached, "What will the Lords do?" Reformers asked the question, anti-reformers

asked it, the king asked it, and his ministers asked it. There could be no doubt whatever, that if the peers consulted their own opinions and inclinations, the bill would be flung out by an overwhelming majority; but it was still fondly hoped by the administration and its supporters, that despair of ultimate success and dread of consequences would cause them to respect the wishes of the majority of the Lower House and of the nation. In order to secure this result, the friends of the bill brought every possible influence to bear on the Lords. The press alternately soothed and threatened now the spiritual and now the temporal peers. Throughout the country, meetings were held and resolutions adopted which would, it was hoped, convince the Upper House that the people did not, as the enemies of the bill industriously asserted, waver in their attachment to it. At these meetings, which were both numerous and enthusiastic, petitions were adopted, praying the Lords, often in very outspoken language, to carry through the measure with all possible despatch.

The people, thus up and doing, were not kept long in suspense. We have already related that the bill passed the Commons on the morning of the 22nd of September. On the evening of the same day it was carried up to the House of Lords, where it was agreed that the second reading should be proposed on the night of the following Monday, October the 3rd.

Accordingly, on that evening, after the presentation and discussion of a large number of petitions, most of them in favour of the bill, but some of them in opposition to it, the order of the day for its second reading was read, and then, amidst deep silence, Earl Grey advanced to the table to address the House in support of it. It was a solemn moment—one of the most solemn that has ever occurred in the history of the British senate. The eyes of the whole nation—we may almost say of the whole world—were fixed on the Lords, and they felt it. And the premier was now standing before them to propose to an assembly—the majority of which he knew regarded him with a hostile respect—a measure which he had taken up in his youth, for which he had carried on what seemed a hopeless and almost quixotic struggle, through all the best years of his long public life, and which he was now in his old age enabled to bring forward as the first minister of the crown. The recollections of the past and the responsibilities of the present rushed into his mind with overpowering force. He essayed to speak, but his agitation deprived him of utterance, and notwithstanding the sympathetic and encouraging cheers which proceeded from every part

of the House, he was compelled to resume his seat. In a few moments he rose again, and spoke in a very low tone, which grew louder as he proceeded, until each word became distinctly audible in every corner of the House.

He was followed by Lord Wharncliffe, one of the most moderate of the opponents of the bill; but who, though he admitted the necessity of a considerable reform of the Lower House, considered the measure of the government so violent and objectionable that he moved its rejection. Finding, however, at a subsequent period of the evening, that the terms of his motion were unusual, and might be regarded as insulting to the House of Commons, he wished to substitute for it the customary formula—"that the bill be read a second time this day six months." Ministers resisted this change, wishing to retain the advantage in debate which the original wording of the motion gave them. They were, however, after a long discussion, obliged to yield to the majority, and the motion was altered according to Lord Wharncliffe's desire. The Duke of Wellington spoke strongly against the measure, arguing that, under the system it established, the king would not be able to carry on the government of this country on the principles on which governments had been conducted at any former period.

Lord Lyndhurst, the lord chancellor under the Duke of Wellington's administration, and Lord Tenterden, the lord chief justice, gave utterance to the prevailing wish and opinion of the legal profession when they announced that they would vote against the bill.

Dr. Howley, the Archbishop of Canterbury, followed the chief justice. No prelate had ever more worthily filled the throne of Lanfranc, Anselm, Becket, Laud, and Sancroft; none had ever more fully commanded the reverence of the House of Lords. Briefly, hesitatingly, and with evidently deep feeling, he declared that he should have supported a moderate reform, but that he regarded this bill as destructive. The Duke of Sussex, the king's brother, declared that he should vote for the bill; and his cousin, the Duke of Gloucester, briefly announced his intention to vote against it. On the morning of the 8th of October the House divided, when there appeared—

For the amendment	..	Present	...	...	150
"	"	Proxies	...	...	49—199
Against	...	Present	...	...	128
"	...	Proxies	...	...	30—158

Majority against the second reading 41

The House then adjourned at twenty minutes past six in the morning.

Meanwhile, the French were engaged in abolishing the hereditary peerage—an event which, though not much referred to in the debates, was no doubt a good deal in the thoughts of noble lords, producing different results according to the various constitutions of their minds, and the different ways in which it was regarded by them. By the majority of the people of this country, irritated as they were by the opposition offered to the Reform Bill in the Upper House of the legislature, it was hailed as an omen of what was coming in England.

CHAPTER IV.

THE REFORM BILL CARRIED.

NEVER perhaps had the whole English nation been in such a state of feverish and excited expectation as on that Saturday, the 8th day of October, 1831, on the dawn of which we left the peers walking out of their own House, after having thrown out the Reform Bill. The news spread through the country with the speed of lightning, producing wherever it came terror, disappointment, indignation, or joy. Every man felt as if he were walking on ground from which a volcano might burst forth. The people could do nothing, think of nothing, talk of nothing, but "the bill." The very women and children caught the contagion of the prevalent feeling, and were ardent reformers or violent anti-reformers. By the Tories the intelligenco was welcomed with an exultation which was wholesomely chastened with alarm. But the former feeling they were compelled to conceal, for the reformers were not in a mood to tolerate its manifestation. By these latter the tidings were received with a deep feeling of exasperation, which only needed a leader and a distinct aim in order to produce great results. A stirring word thrown among the multitude at that moment might have produced a revolution. But no such word was spoken; indeed, the leaders of the movement, while desiring that the popular enthusiasm should be sustained, as being necessary to the success of the bill, were also anxious that it should be curbed, and fully alive to the destruction that might result from its possible excesses. However, expressions of disappointed hope and fixed resolve were not wanting. In London and in many other towns the shops were closed, and the bells of the churches muffled. The shopkeepers of Spitalfields decided to keep a political fast-day, and to close their shops on the following Wednesday. A run for gold was commenced, and caused

no little alarm to the governors of the Bank. On the very day on which the bill was rejected by the Lords about 200 members of the House of Commons met at Willis's Rooms, and unanimously agreed that resolutions should be submitted to the House of Commons, affirming that it was expedient to declare their unaltered and undiminished attachment to the great measure of reform, and their determined purpose to support the king's ministers in the present crisis; a resolution which, as we shall presently see, was speedily carried out. The same evening, and within twelve hours of the fatal division, the common council met, and passed similar resolutions.

But while these efforts were being made to secure the ultimate success of the bill, the popular indignation against the authors of the nation's disappointment was being loudly and strongly vented. The reforming press, at once expressing and stimulating the general feeling, threw off all the restraints it had hitherto imposed on itself, in the hope of soothing the anti-reforming lords into compliance with the nation's desires. The abolition of the House of Peers was frequently suggested. Still more violent was the language employed by the orators who addressed the meetings which were now again being held in every part of the metropolis and of the United Kingdom. The whole force of the popular rage was directed against the majority of the House of Lords. On Monday, October 10th, a great crowd assembled along the line of road from Whitehall to Parliament Street. The peers and members who had supported the bill were received with tremendous cheers, while those who had opposed it, though protected from personal violence by a very strong party of the new police, were received with roars of execration, which, it was said at the time, would have drowned a peal of thunder. The bishops especially were objects of popular detestation, and could not appear in the streets without danger of personal violence. Many of the temporal peers were assaulted on their way to or from the House. The Duke of Newcastle, who was peculiarly obnoxious to the reformers, was personally assailed, and his house attacked. The Marquis of Londonderry, riding in a cabriolet, was stopped, violently struck, and would probably have been murdered, but for the presence of mind of the driver, who whipped the horse forward into a gallop, and saved his master from the exasperated populace. The anti-reforming peers—irritated by the treatment to which they had been exposed, and ascribing it in some measure to the language employed by Earl Grey and other ministerial speakers in the late debate—loudly complained of the alleged

remissness of the government in not suppressing violence which tended to intimidate the opponents of the bill, and to prevent them from voting according to their convictions. This impression produced a scene in the House of Lords on the evening of the 11th of October, almost rivalling in violence that which occurred on the eve of the dissolution.

The Bishop of Exeter having complained with great warmth and vehemence that the bishops had been vilified and insulted, and that too, "by men of the highest station in his majesty's councils," Earl Grey rebutted this accusation with at least equal warmth, characterising it as the most intemperate and the most unfounded insinuation he had ever heard from any member of the House. "I dare," he continued, "the right reverend prelate to state, if he can, one single syllable of truth to support the falsest and most calumnious accusation I ever heard."

The bishop thus challenged, replied by referring to a speech which Lord Grey had delivered in the course of the debate on the second reading of the Reform Bill, and in which he had warned the bishops to "set their houses in order. It is true," he added, "that the noble lord did not conclude the sentence. He left that for us to do. But it was impossible not to know that he referred to words in which the prophet threatened destruction. The noble lord, in the same speech, took special care to remind the bishops that certain important questions were in agitation which might take a turn that would prove favourable or unfavourable according to the conduct of the bench on that night. What are these questions? If the noble lord meant that schemes of confiscation were in contemplation—that the bold among the multitude would be encouraged, and the multitude goaded on to more immediate execution—then, indeed, I could conceive that the conduct of the bishops that night might have the effect of driving the multitude to rash purposes. Have I said anything which the proofs I have produced have not fully substantiated?" Earl Grey in his reply accused the bishop of having charged his majesty's ministers with having "purposely done all in their power to encourage tumult and excite the mob to acts of popular violence." The bishop solemnly denied that he had used any such words, and Earl Grey retorted that the right reverend prelate, in his anger, was not likely to remember the words he did use, and concluded his reply to him by saying, "The right reverend prelate has uttered a foul and calumnious assertion, totally unfounded in truth; nor has he in the least benefited himself by the explanation he has entered into."

The Duke of Newcastle and the Marquis of Londonderry complained that they had been attacked by riotous mobs, and had not received the protection to which they were entitled. Lord Melbourne, the Home Secretary, assured them that it was the first desire of his majesty's government in general, and of himself in particular, to afford every possible protection both to the persons and properties of all his majesty's subjects; and Lord Wharncliffe testified to the zeal and activity displayed by Lord Melbourne as Secretary of the Home Department.

On the 12th of October an immense procession of delegates, including, as was computed, 60,000 persons, almost all of whom were male adults, marched to St. James's to present an address to the king. It was delivered to his majesty by Mr. Hume, who announced its reception to the petitioners, and exhorted them to disperse peaceably and return home.

This advice was followed by most of those to whom it was addressed; but some of the crowd, who had either formed part of the procession, or had assembled for the purpose of witnessing it, were bent on mischief. The houses of the Duke of Wellington and the Marquis of Bristol were attacked, and the windows demolished. Several collisions took place between the police and the mob in various parts of the metropolis. The Duke of Cumberland was dragged from his horse on his way back from the House of Lords, and rescued with difficulty by the exertions of the police. Poor hot-headed Lord Londonderry was the object of another assault. He was on his way to the House of Lords, when he fell in with a mob of some 4000 persons. A man in the crowd called out, "There goes the Marquis of Londonderry." He was instantly assailed with hisses and stones, whereupon he pulled out a pistol, but was prevailed on by a friend who accompanied him to abstain from discharging it, and to retire to the Horse Guards, where a large body of troops was drawn up; but before he reached them he was struck by a stone, which inflicted a severe wound on the right temple.

While these things were being done in the metropolis, the same spirit was manifested elsewhere. It is true that Sudbury, famous in the annals of corruption, rang its church bells and fired cannon to celebrate the rejection of the bill; but these demonstrations could not be made elsewhere in safety, if indeed at all. There were serious riots at Derby, where the borough gaol was besieged and several persons killed; at Nottingham, where the castle, which was the property of the Duke of Newcastle, was burnt to the ground. Colwick

Castle was also fired; but the flames were speedily extinguished. At Beeston a factory was burnt down; and the house of correction was saved by the timely arrival of the 15th Hussars. At Loughborough there were serious disturbances. Belvoir Castle was attacked. On the whole, however, the severe disappointment was borne with creditable patience, but this was in a great measure owing to the determination of ministers to retain office. The question of resignation had been very seriously considered. While they were deliberating upon it, they received a message from the king, now thoroughly alarmed at the state of the country, begging them to retain their places; it was also intimated to them that this was the wish of the majority of the peers. They therefore resolved to retain their offices, and this resolution was justly regarded as a pledge that the struggle would be renewed as soon as possible. They hastened to confirm this expectation, and to promise another measure of equal efficiency with that which had just been rejected. These declarations were imperatively called for. The danger was imminent, and ministers knew it, and did all that lay in their power to tranquilize the people, and to assure them that the bill was only delayed, not finally defeated.

Lord Brougham especially, on Wednesday, October 12th, in his place in the House of Lords, referring to the outrages which had been committed, condemned them in the strongest terms, declaring that the authors and abettors of such acts were the worst enemies of reform. "The people," he continued, "who are zealously, anxiously, and devotedly desirous of the passing of that great measure should not permit themselves, on account of any temporary disappointment in that respect, to be betrayed into proceedings which could alone be expected from the bitterest foes of the success of that momentous measure which they have so much at heart—they should not allow any temporary defeat which their hopes and wishes may have experienced to drive them into a course of proceeding inconsistent with the public tranquillity and destructive of the peace of society. I call upon them, as their friend and as the friend of reform, not to give way to any such unfounded disappointment. I tell them that reform is only delayed for a short period. I tell them that the bill will pass,—that the bill must pass,—that a bill founded on exactly similar principles, and equally extensive and efficient with the bill which has been thrown out, shall in a very short period become part and parcel of the law of the land."

This timely declaration did much to allay the irritation that prevailed, and to reconcile the people to a delay which they hoped

would not be of long duration. Meanwhile the House of Commons lost no time in speaking out. In accordance with the determination of the meeting held on the Saturday on which the bill was rejected, on the Monday following Lord Elbrington moved and Mr. Dundas seconded this resolution, which was carried the same evening by a majority of 131 : "That while this House laments the present state of a bill for introducing a reform into the Commons House of Parliament, in favour of which the opinion of the country stands unequivocally pronounced, and which has been matured by discussion the most anxious and the most laborious, it feels itself imperatively called on to reassert its firm adherence to the principal leading provisions of that great measure, and to express its unabated confidence in the integrity, perseverance, and ability of the ministers, who, in introducing and conducting it, so well consulted the best interests of the country."

The outrages which had been committed and the prevailing popular excitement, were brought under the notice of the House of Commons on the evening of October 12th, with more especial reference to a great meeting at Birmingham, which was said to have been attended by 150,000 persons, and at which very violent language had been held. At the same meeting a vote of thanks was passed to Lord Althorp and Lord J. Russell. In acknowledging this compliment, Lord J. Russell wrote, "It is impossible that the whisper of a faction should prevail over the voice of a nation."

Sir H. Hardinge, amidst the loud assenting cheers of the opposition, denounced this phrase as insulting to the House of Lords, and as improperly identifying the government with the political unions, and especially that of Birmingham, under whose auspices the meeting had been assembled.

Lord J. Russell, after stigmatising in the strongest terms the outrages that had been committed, and especially those which had been directed against the mansion of the Duke of Wellington, to whom the country was so much indebted for his past services, defended the expressions he had employed in his letter to Mr. Attwood, and explained that he did not mean to apply the phrase 'whisper of a faction' to the whole majority of the House of Peers, but only to a small self-interested portion of that majority.

Lord Althorp, referring to the charge of his having written a letter to the Birmingham Political Union, declared that he had written no letter whatever to the body known by that title. He admitted that he had addressed a letter to the chairman of a meeting at Birmingham, consisting of 150,000 persons, expressing

his sense of a vote of thanks with which so large a portion of his fellow-countrymen had thought fit to honour his conduct; and he could not think that in doing so he had acted by any means in a manner unworthy of his station. In acknowledging to the chairman of the meeting the honour thus conferred on him, he had taken the opportunity to recommend that gentleman to use his influence for the prevention of acts of violence, or illegal and unconstitutional excesses.

Reformers in their impatience did not consider sufficiently the fatigues and anxieties to which both the government and the legislature had been exposed, and the absolute necessity that existed for a short respite from their labours; and listened to rumours of dissensions in the ministry.

Earl Grey and Lord Brougham in the House of Lords flatly contradicted these reports. The latter, after declaring that there had not been any difference between Earl Grey and himself as to the minutest particulars of the bill, gave the following account of his own labours and those of his colleagues: "I must avow my opinion that for the session to commence after so brief an interval, and for the chancellor—I mean the chancellor in another house—to begin his labours again, and for my noble friend who has introduced the bill to renew his advocacy of the measure, I must pronounce my opinion that this would be physically impossible, after having given three months, day and night, to deliberation and discussion. None feel more than I do the impossibility of continuing such exertions. It was just twelve months last Friday since I began hard work in London, and during all that time I have enjoyed no respite or relaxation with the exception of two days at Christmas and Easter, and even they were chiefly spent upon the road. During that period I have been occupied from six or seven in the morning until twelve and one at night; and if any man is so unreasonable as to say that I ought not to be allowed to enjoy a little repose, with that man I will not pause to reason. I will throw myself on the good sense and kind feeling of my countrymen, and I am confident that they will not bring in a verdict of guilty. Whatever advice may be offered as to the time of prorogation, the people of England may rest assured that it will be given on a solemn principle of public duty, and with a view to the carrying of that great measure, to which none can feel more devoted than myself and my colleagues. The public will see, when the measure is again before parliament, the wisdom with which we have acted; and that the period that will intervene is no longer ~~that~~ is required, I will not say in justice, but in mercy."

At length, on the 20th of October, the indispensable business of the session having been transacted, the king in person prorogued the parliament to Tuesday, the 22nd day of November, with the usual formalities.

Meanwhile the anti-reformers, who had been terrified at the first violences which followed the rejection of the Reform Bill, and thought that their oft-repeated predictions of revolution were about to receive an immediate fulfilment, finding that the crisis had passed without any very serious disturbances, and seeing that the reformers bore their disappointment with patience and calmness, began to take heart, and to assert that a reaction had commenced, and that the people were sick of the bill. They saw with delight, while reformers marked with silent regret, that Lord Ashley, the anti-reforming candidate for the county of Dorset, had beaten his opponent, Mr. Ponsonby, a moderate reformer, by some thirty-six votes; that at Liverpool the moderate reformer, Lord Sandon, son of Lord Harrowby, one of the leading opponents of the bill, had obtained a majority of 849 at the end of the second day over the thorough-going reformer, Mr. Thornley, who then retired from the hopeless struggle; that in Pembrokeshire, Mr. Greville, the reform candidate, had withdrawn from the contest with Sir J. Owen, an anti-reformer, at the end of the second day, finding himself in a minority of 108. On the other hand, it was some consolation to the reformers to find the county of Cambridge returning their candidate, Mr. Townley, by a majority of 536 over his opponent, Captain Yorke.

But while the Tories were congratulating themselves on the elections they had gained, and triumphantly pointing to them as proofs of a commencing reaction, they were very seriously disquieted by the proceedings of political unions which had been established in London, Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, and other large towns, and were every day being formed in smaller boroughs, and agitated for reform more and more strongly. These associations were receiving a sort of military organisation, and were acting together in concert for the promotion of reform. The *Times* and other ministerial journals applauded the movement, and urged reformers to establish similar bodies in every part of the kingdom. The proceedings of existing unions and the formation of new unions were carefully and triumphantly chronicled. The embodiment of a "conservative guard," to resist the "rich opponents of reform and the ragged promoters of disturbances," was strenuously advocated; and on the last day of October we find Sir F. Burdett occupying the chair at a great meeting of the inhabitant householders of the

metropolis, convened for the purpose of forming a National Political Union, whose great object should be to obtain good government, and preserve social order through a full and efficient representation of the people in the Commons House of Parliament. These unions, all along a source of constant alarm to the anti-reformers, were now beginning to be regarded with no small uneasiness by many sincere reformers. The king continually urged his ministers to suppress these associations, and they issued a proclamation on the 2nd of November in which the political unions were denounced as unconstitutional and illegal.

Before it appeared the popular sentiment had manifested itself in a very alarming and highly destructive fashion. Sir Charles Wetherell went down to Bristol to hold the usual gaol delivery, and made his public entry into the city. Although some precautions had been taken to prevent a disturbance, a large and violent crowd filled the way through which the procession passed, and received Sir Charles with hootings and execrations, stones were thrown at the carriage in which he was seated, and several persons were severely injured. He, however, reached the Guildhall in safety, though not without great difficulty, and there opened the commission with the usual formalities. Thence he proceeded to the Mansion House, which was besieged by the mob, whence he escaped by clambering over the roofs of the adjacent houses, and left the city in the disguise of a postilion. His flight, however, was not generally known, and the attack continued. The mob, encouraged by the indecision of the civil authorities, and the still more culpable weakness of Colonel Brereton, who commanded the military, pillaged and destroyed almost without restraint. The Mansion House, the Bridewell, the city gaol, recently erected at a cost of £100,000, the bishop's palace, the excise office, the custom house, a very large building, three prisons, four toll houses, and forty-four private dwellings and warehouses were sacked and destroyed, and a great number of the rioters perished in the flames they had kindled, or were killed by the soldiers. About the same time that this terrible destruction of life and property took place, there were riots at Bath, Worcester, Coventry, Warwick, and in other towns. The destruction of the bishop's palace at Bristol was by no means a solitary instance of the detestation in which the bishops and clergy, but especially the bishops, were held at this moment. The Bishop of London was absent from the division on the second reading of the bill. He had been announced to preach at St. Ann's, Westminster; but finding that on his appearance in

the pulpit the congregation would leave the church, or perhaps even maltreat him, he did not fulfil his engagement. At a somewhat later period, Dr. Ryder, Bishop of Lichfield, a man of the highest character, after preaching a charity sermon at St. Bride's church, was in danger of being killed. The Archbishop of Canterbury, the saintly and venerated Howley, coming to Canterbury to hold his primary visitation, was insulted, spat on, and with great difficulty, and by a very circuitous route, brought to the deanery, amidst the yells and execrations of a violent and angry mob. The Bishop of Bath and Wells being expected to visit the latter city, a popular commotion was apprehended, and troops were sent for his protection. On the 5th of November the bishops in many of the towns, and especially the cathedral towns, were substituted for Guy Fawkes, and received the honours usually accorded to that worthy. The Bishops of Winchester and Exeter were hanged and burnt in effigy close to their own palaces. Nor was this feeling confined to the persons of the clergy. It engendered a savage Vandalism towards those sacred buildings, which we, with all our mechanical advantages, vainly strive to rival. The author of this work, then a boy, well remembers the fierce shout of applause which rent the air at a large public meeting at Canterbury, when one of the speakers suggested that the noble cathedral of that city should be converted into a stable for the horses of the cavalry. Such were the disastrous consequences of identifying the church with a party in the state, and that too the party which was engaged in resisting progress passionately demanded by the mass of the people, and essential to the safety and well-being of the state.

Parliament reassembled on the 6th of December, and on the 12th Lord J. Russell brought forward the third Reform Bill. In asking leave to introduce it, he spoke in a tone which showed that the recent occurrences had caused him to regard with considerable alarm the consequences that might result from another disappointment of the people's wishes; and his speech was evidently designed to allay the excitement which prevailed out of doors, as well as to persuade his hearers that the danger of offering a prolonged resistance was greater and more imminent than any danger that could arise from concession. He also gave a statement of certain changes that had been made in the bill. The census of 1831 was adopted in the place of that of 1821. But the test now adopted was the number of houses instead of the number of persons; and not the number of £10 houses only, but the number rated to the assessed taxes up to the preceding April. Aldborough (Yorkshire), Ashbur-

ton,* Amersham, East Grinstead, Okehampton, and Saltash would be entirely disfranchised. Midhurst, Petersfield, Eye, Wareham, Woodstock, and Lostwithiel, each of which had been condemned to lose one of its members, would now retain both. Therefore the number of semi-disfranchised boroughs would be reduced from forty-one to thirty. The proposal to diminish the number of members in the House by twenty-three was now withdrawn. Ten of the twenty-three seats thus gained were to be given to the most considerable towns to which the bill, as previously introduced, had only given one member. A member was to be given to Chatham, to the county of Monmouth, and to Tavistock. The remaining ten seats were to be given to the towns of Bolton, Brighton, Bradford, Blackburn, Macclesfield, Stockport, Stoke-upon-Trent, Halifax, Stroud, and Huddersfield. The former bills continued the franchise to all existent resident freemen and apprentices and others with incorporate rights. The present bill continued the franchise to all freemen possessing it by birth or servitude for ever, provided that they resided within the city or borough or within seven miles of the place of voting.

The second reading of the measure was proposed by Lord Althorp on Friday, December 16th. He contented himself by simply proposing it, adding that, when it was disposed of, he should move that the House at its rising should adjourn till Tuesday the 17th of January, 1832. All parties were now anxious to shorten a discussion, the prolongation of which would serve not to delay the progress of the bill, but to abridge the vacation. Lord Porechester, however, moved its rejection, in a speech in which he stigmatised this measure as more objectionable than its predecessors; and after two nights' debate the House divided on Sunday morning, when the numbers were:—

For the second reading	...	...	...	..	324
For the amendment	...	...	...	.	162
					—
Majority	..	...	...	...	162

This majority of exactly two to one was greater by more than fifty votes than that which passed the preceding bill, and exceeded by twenty-six votes that by which its second reading was carried.

And now the country was more and more occupied with a consideration which for months past had been engaging its attention. The question now was no longer, "What will the Lords do?" but

* It was subsequently allowed to return two representatives as before.

“What will be done with the Lords?” The extreme radical party clamoured loudly for the abolition of the hereditary branch of the legislature, but the great majority of reformers were continually urging ministers to resort to a large creation of peers; and much was to be said in favour of this expedient. During the last fifty years the enemies of reform had been almost without interruption in possession of power, and it was affirmed that they had filled the House of Lords with peers who were the ardent defenders of the abuses and corruptions the which bill aimed at removing. It was pointed out that, of the peers created before 1790, one hundred and eight voted in favour of the bill, and only four against it: while of the peers who owed their elevation to Mr. Pitt, fifty voted for the bill, and one hundred and fifty against it. The bishops, too, owed their elevation to the bench to anti-reform premiers, and had almost unanimously opposed the bill. It was urged, therefore, that ministers owed it to themselves and to their party to restore the equilibrium of the House in reference to the reform question. At first ministers did not lend a ready ear to these suggestions. The king was strenuously opposed to such an exercise of his prerogative; Lord Grey was almost equally averse to it; and most of the other members of the cabinet, being either peers themselves, or closely connected with the peerage, were very unwilling to take a step calculated to destroy the independence of that branch of the legislature. Still there appeared to be no other means of carrying the bill; and strong as were the objections of the ministers to create peers, their dread of the consequences which would result from the frustration of what they themselves had denominated the just demands of the people was no less strong. The subject was frequently discussed; at first with the idea that the creation of ten or twenty peers might suffice. Lord Brougham was the first convert, and, once convinced, he advocated it with all the ardour and impetuosity that belonged to his character. Earl Grey held out long, the Canning section of the cabinet still longer; but finally all came to the conclusion that the creation of a large body of peers, though much to be deprecated and regretted, was the only means of preventing far more terrible evils. Still the repugnance of the king to this expedient remained rather strengthened than diminished. He had indeed tardily and reluctantly agreed to create the small number of peers which it was thought would suffice to carry the second reading, but beyond this he would not go. If therefore the bill should pass that stage, and the Lords should materially alter the character of the bill—as, from the avowed opinions of the majority

there was every reason to expect that they would—the ministers would be obliged to violate the pledges they had given, or abandon their bill and retire from office. The question, therefore, was for the present left in abeyance.

Thus, amidst the anxieties of reformers on the one hand, and the dread of revolution on the other; amidst incendiary fires now again prevailing,* and Asiatic cholera spreading through the country;† amidst distress of trade and dread of coming bankruptcy; amidst the horror created by the crimes of Burke, Hare, and Williams‡—the year 1831 went gloomily out; but the majority of the nation, exasperated by the obstinacy of the anti-reform peers, hailed with a grim satisfaction the abolition of the hereditary peerage of France, and hoped that this example would be speedily followed in England.

The new year opened with a series of trials arising out of the disturbances which followed the rejection of the Reform Bill by the House of Lords. Special commissions were sent down to Bristol and Nottingham to try the rioters of those neighbourhoods, great numbers of whom were convicted. Colonel Brereton and Captain Warrington were tried by court-martial. The former committed suicide, the latter was sentenced to be cashiered, but by the recommendation of the court was allowed to sell out. Later in the year the Mayor of Bristol was tried before the Court of King's Bench, but was honourably acquitted, the jury giving it as their opinion that, in a situation of great difficulty, and when deserted by those from whom he was entitled to expect aid and encouragement, he had conducted himself with great firmness and propriety. Four men were executed at Bristol, and three at Nottingham.

Parliament reassembled on the 17th of January, and on the 20th it went into committee on the bill. Then the old game of procrastination and delay was played over again by the opposition; but by steady perseverance ministers at length succeeded in triumphing over all opposition; and the bill passed through committee on the 14th of March, was read a third time by a majority of 355 against 239, and passed the House of Commons on Friday,

* Numerous incendiary fires occurred in the neighbourhoods of Bedford, Cambridge, Canterbury, Devizes, and Sherbourne, in November and December. There were no fewer than eleven between the 23rd and 28th of the latter month.

† It did not appear in the metropolis until the beginning of February.

‡ These wretches committed murders for the purpose of selling the bodies of their victims to surgeons for dissection, and their teeth to dentists.

March 23rd. It was read a first time in the House of Lords on the following Monday on the motion of Earl Grey, and it was agreed that the second reading should be moved on Thursday, April 6th, which was subsequently changed to the following Monday, at the request of Lord Wharncliffe, who spoke on behalf of a small body of peers headed by himself and Lord Harrowby, which for the moment held the balance between the contending parties in the House of Lords, the members of which, under the names of "waverers" * or "trimmers," became for a short period the heroes of the day. Their opposition to the bill, though decided, had been expressed in terms much less uncompromising than those employed by the Duke of Wellington and most of the Tory speakers, and approved by the majority of the peers. Lord Wharncliffe especially had admitted that a very large measure of reform must be conceded, and though he and Lord Harrowby opposed the second reading in 1831, they hoped that when the bill was reintroduced it might be modified in such a manner as to meet their views, and enable them to support it. The king himself entertained similar views, and hoped, by means of the waverers, to escape from the embarrassing situation in which he foresaw that he would be placed. Negotiations were therefore carried on, commencing soon after the rejection of the bill, between the king and the waverers, through the medium of Sir Herbert Taylor, his majesty's secretary, with the full cognizance and approval of the premier. But Lord Grey and the government were deeply pledged to introduce a measure fully equal in efficiency to that which the House of Lords had rejected, and the very object of the waverers was to diminish that efficiency in the sense in which the term was understood by the ministry and the nation. All therefore that the government could do, with every desire to meet and conciliate them, was to make such alterations in the bill as, without rendering it less effective, might afford them an excuse for supporting the second reading when the bill came again before the House of Lords. And this is the true key to almost all the alterations which were made in the measure on its third introduction. Some of the features to which Lords Wharncliffe and Harrowby had particularly objected were withdrawn; but they were balanced by other concessions to the popular feeling, such as the enfranchisement of a greater number of large towns. This was all the waverers could gain by their long

* Very incorrectly, as Lord Brougham has justly remarked in his *Memoirs*, vol. iii. p. 188, "for they stood firmly by their own view of the *cause*."

negotiations; and though they were very far from being satisfied, they resolved to vote for the second reading. Accordingly, when the bill was introduced in the Upper House, Lords Harrowby and Wharnccliffe stated that, although they still strongly objected to it, they thought that some concession should be made to public opinion, and would vote for the second reading, but would endeavour to improve its details in committee; but that if they should fail in this attempt, they would vote for the rejection of the bill on the third reading. The Bishop of London was still more explicit. He not only promised to vote for the second reading, but declared that he would not support any amendment that would go to alter the bill so as to mutilate or destroy its essential principles, and by that means bring it into such a state that the Commons would refuse to agree to it. These frank declarations were met with equal frankness by Earl Grey. He said that the expressions of his noble friends, and especially those of the Bishop of London, afforded him great satisfaction; that he was apprehensive that some alterations might be proposed to which he could not accede; but he promised that he would give them due consideration in the true spirit of conciliation. The Duke of Wellington announced that he could not follow the example of Lords Wharnccliffe and Harrowby; the bill was not reform, but in many respects revolution; and Lord Grey himself had insisted that it was really, truly, and in principle, exactly the same measure as that to which they had refused to give a second reading. These declarations expressed the feelings and opinions of the great majority of those by whose votes the bill had been previously rejected.

On Monday, the 9th of April, the question of the second reading was brought forward. Lords Harrowby and Wharnccliffe justified at great length the course which they had already announced that they would take, and the Duke of Wellington, in accordance with his previous declaration, gave the bill the same uncompromising opposition as before. "It cannot be denied," he said, "that the parliament was elected under circumstances of real excitement, which has ever since been kept up by the circulation of reports that the king wishes for a reform in parliament such as the present bill proposes. Now, my lords, I do not believe a word of any such thing. My opinion is, my lords, that the king follows the advice of his servants; it is also my opinion, that the part taken in the king's name on this subject will make it very difficult to do otherwise than reform parliament. I am fully persuaded, my lords, that it is a mistake to suppose that the king has any interest in this bill; and

I am satisfied, that if the real feeling of the king were made known to the country, the noble earl would not be able to pass the bill."

But while the duke thus persevered in a determined opposition to the bill, many of the lords, believing that the minister had obtained the king's consent to a creation of peers in case the bill should be rejected on its second reading, and feeling that the independence of their House, and their own individual importance, would be seriously affected by a large addition to their number, made under such circumstances, were disposed either to absent themselves or vote with Lords Harrowby and Wharncliffe for the second reading. Earl Grey and his colleagues did their best to encourage these dispositions. The premier especially held out hopes of considerable concessions in committee.

At the conclusion of the debate the House divided, when the numbers were —

Content	Present	128	
	Proxies	56	— 184
Non-content	Present	126	
	Proxies	49	— 175

Majority in favour of the second reading . . . 9*

Thus the second reading of the bill was carried, though by a majority so small † as plainly to show that the opposition would have the game in their own hands. The House adjourned at the beginning of the following week for the Easter vacation, and did not resume its sittings until the 7th of May, when it resolved itself into a committee on the bill. Lord Grey on this occasion manifested the same conciliatory disposition as before, and moved the omission from the first clause of the bill of the words "fifty-six," thus leaving undetermined the number of the boroughs to be disfranchised, and giving some appearance of freedom to the debates that were to follow.

The opposition, however, were not satisfied with this concession. Lord Lyndhurst moved that the consideration of the disfranchising clauses should be postponed until the enfranchising clauses had first been considered, so that instead of making enfranchisement a consequence of disfranchisement, disfranchisement might follow

* The number of the bill's supporters on this occasion, as compared with the last, had increased from 158 to 184, while the opposition had diminished from 199 to 175.

† The majority of those *present* at the division was only two, and proxies could not be used in committee.

enfranchisement. The noble lord, and those who supported him, made many protestations of their desire to give the bill a friendly and candid consideration, and of their willingness to disfranchise a large number of boroughs. Lord Wharncliffe, in particular, distinctly stated, that while he thought it to be his duty to vote with Lord Lyndhurst, he was determined to go the full length of disfranchising at least the number of boroughs contained in Schedule A. In fact, the proposal was put forward as being simply a question of the order in which the clauses of the bill were to be considered in committee; and it might seem to be a matter of little importance whether the order proposed by the ministry or that contended for by their opponents should be adopted; but the real question was, whether the control of the committee was to be in the hands of the friends of reform, or of those who had all along been its open enemies, and who, if they were now prepared to allow the bill to pass in any shape, notoriously yielded because they durst no longer resist the plainly declared will of the nation. Ministers therefore wisely resolved to take the first opportunity of bringing this question to an issue. Accordingly, after several of them had strongly contended that the proposal of Lord Lyndhurst was opposed to the principles of the bill, Earl Grey distinctly warned the House that he should regard its success as fatal to his measure. In spite of this warning, Lord Lyndhurst's motion was carried by a majority of 35; there being 151 in favour of it, and 116 against it.

Earl Grey at once moved that the House should resume, adding that he should also move, that the further consideration of the bill should be delayed till Thursday the 10th. Lord Ellenborough, who moved the amendment on the second reading, gave a sketch of the reform which he and his friends were prepared to support. But it was rejected by the government and scouted by the great body of the people.

Nothing now remained for the ministry but to recommend such a creation of peers as would enable them to carry the bill unimpaird through the House of Lords. The king, as we have already intimated, entertained the most decided objection to this step. He had, with great reluctance, so far yielded as to consent to the creation of a few peers, if it should be found absolutely necessary to carry the bill; but he wished that every possible expedient should be tried to avoid this dire necessity. When, therefore, it came to be a question of the order in which the clauses of the bill were to be taken, he was fully justified, according to the under-

standing which existed between himself and his advisers, in refusing to create peers. But besides this, a great change had come over him in regard to the Reform Bill. There is every reason to believe that he had in the first instance given it his cordial approval; that he had frankly and honestly supported his ministers in their endeavours to carry it, and had, at the same time, candidly stated to them the length to which he was prepared to go with them, and the point at which he was resolved to stop. But in following the discussions on the measure, he had been gradually more and more influenced by the predictions of revolution, uttered by men who enjoyed a high reputation for political sagacity, and by the parallel which was often drawn between the commencement of his reign and that of the unfortunate Louis XVI, which seemed to be borne out by the increased agitation which pervaded the country, and by the rapid wane of his popularity. He saw too, with great dissatisfaction, the growing feeling which prevailed against all hereditary authority. Thus the Reform Bill, if not absolutely odious to him, was regarded by him with much less complacency than before; and this feeling extended to the ministry, whom he naturally regarded as the authors of the dilemma in which he found himself placed. When therefore Lord Grey and his colleagues required him to choose between a creation of peers large enough to enable them to carry the bill unimpaired or their resignation, he accepted the latter alternative. In all this there is nothing that is not perfectly intelligible,—nothing to justify the charge of systematic dishonesty and duplicity which has been brought against this monarch, but which was certainly never believed by those whose constant official intercourse with him afforded them excellent opportunities of forming a correct judgment of his character, and whose penetration was equal to the task of fathoming a deeper mind than that of William IV.

On the evening of May 9th, Earl Grey announced the king's acceptance of the resignation of his ministry, and moved that the order for going into committee on the next day should be discharged, adding that he did not think it necessary to fix another day for the purpose. The Earl of Carnarvon, one of the most violent opponents of the measure, stigmatised in very strong terms the conduct of the ministers, and moved that their lordships should "proceed with the consideration of the Reform Bill in committee on Monday next." Earl Grey replied with that severe dignity, which on such occasions no one could more effectually assume. But the motion was adopted, and the House separated.

In the House of Commons Lord Althorp made an announcement similar to that which had been made by Earl Grey. On May 10th, Lord Ebrington moved a resolution, imploring "his majesty to call to his councils such persons only as will carry into effect, unimpaired in all its essential provisions, that bill for the reform of the representation of the people which has recently passed this House." This motion was carried, after a long discussion, by a majority of eighty.

If the state of the nation was alarming at the last rejection of the bill, it was much more so now. It soon became evident that the feeling in favour of the measure had become more intense and general. At no place was it more distinctly manifested than at Birmingham, which at this time exercised a more powerful influence on the destinies of the bill than the other great towns of the empire, not only on account of its central position and comparative proximity to the metropolis, but also as being the heart of a district densely peopled by a rugged and robust race, who were united almost to a man in determined support of reform. On the very day on which Lord Lyndhurst's motion was carried, a meeting had been held, in anticipation of the rejection or mutilation of the measure by the House of Lords, at which 200,000 persons were said to have been present, and at which very violent language was used and very violent resolutions were adopted. When, therefore, the news of the resignation of Earl Grey's ministry reached Birmingham, it produced a ferment. Everywhere it was resolved not to pay taxes, and not to purchase property which might be distrained for the payment of taxes. This determination was announced in notices placed in most of the windows in the town, and would unquestionably have been carried out, not in Birmingham only, but throughout the country; and not only by the lower classes, but also by many of the upper and middle classes. Lord Milton desired the tax-gatherer to call again, intimating that he might find it necessary to refuse payment; and when afterwards asked in the House of Commons whether he had really used this language, he replied, "Certainly." It was a significant fact, that four Catholic priests and a large number of Quakers joined the Birmingham Union at the moment when it seemed almost ripe for rebellion.

On the 10th of May, the common council of the city of London resolved that "they who have advised his majesty to put a negative on the proposal of ministers to create peers have proved themselves enemies of the sovereign, and have put in imminent hazard the

stability of the throne and the tranquillity and security of the country." They also petitioned the House of Commons to refuse the supplies until reform should have been secured. The same prayer came from almost every part of the kingdom. Efforts were also made to embarrass the new government. The streets of London were covered with placards, on which were printed in huge letters—"Go for gold, and stop the Duke." At the Manchester Savings Bank alone 620 persons had given notice for the withdrawal of deposits to the amount of £16,000. Preparations were being made for a recourse to arms; and there can be no doubt that if the resistance to the popular will had been carried much farther, a civil war would have broken out, or rather an immense and irresistible armed mob would have marched on London, and dictated their own terms to the king, the government, and the legislature. What these terms would have been, it is idle now to conjecture; they probably would have involved the overthrow of the monarchy, and a complete change in the form of government.

In the mean time the king had consulted Lord Lyndhurst, who recommended that the Duke of Wellington should be sent for. The duke, though his conduct on this occasion exposed him to much obloquy and aggravated his unpopularity, appears to have acted in a highly honourable manner. We may doubt his judgment in bringing on the crisis which he was summoned to deal with, but we cannot refuse our admiration to the self-abnegation and courage he displayed. Entertaining the opinions he had all along avowed on the subject of reform, it was only natural that he should endeavour to defeat the measure which the government had brought forward, or, finding that impossible, that he should seek to render it as little objectionable in his eyes as he could venture to make it. But now that the crisis had occurred, his predominant desire was to save his sovereign from the humiliation of being compelled to solicit Earl Grey to return and of consenting to the creation of peers. Still he felt that, after the strong declaration he had made against all reform, after the uncompromising opposition he had offered to the measure now before the house of Lords, he was not the man to carry it through, even in a modified form, or to accept office in an administration by which it was to be taken charge of. He therefore recommended that Sir R. Peel should be sent for and requested to form a government, promising at the same time that, whether in or out of office, he would give every support in his power to the new administration. But Sir R. Peel likewise declined

to accept an office from which he was certain to be ignominiously precipitated in less than a week after his entrance on it, unless he supported all the essential features of a measure he had so strongly denounced. The frightful responsibility which the state of the country imposed on an unpopular minister might well make a man of much stronger nerve than he possessed shrink from a position in which he would probably have to deal with a rebellion. Besides, the Catholic emancipation struggle was still fresh in his remembrance and in the recollection of all men; and if he were now to accept office and carry the Reform Bill, it would appear that the accusation that he had been actuated by a sordid love of the patronage and emoluments of office was really well founded. Men, whose opinion is entitled to some weight, think that if he had accepted office at this juncture, he might have retained it. Looking at the state of the country at that moment, it appears to me that he must have been hurled from power almost before his ministry was formed. He certainly exercised a very wise discretion in declining the offer. At the same time he promised, that if a ministry were formed from the political party to which he belonged, he would give it all the support he could; and there can be no doubt that this promise would have been honourably fulfilled. There was no other man in the anti-reform ranks who possessed sufficient weight to form and lead an administration, except the Duke of Wellington. All the reasons that could be urged against Sir R. Peel's acceptance of office might with equal force be urged against the duke's accession to power, with the additional objection of the loss his ministry would suffer both in weight and strength by Sir R. Peel's refusal to join it. But the duke's devotion to his sovereign prevailed over every other consideration, and seeing that no one else could be found competent to form such a ministry as the king desired, he accepted the thankless and perilous task. The king's eldest natural son had been created Earl of Munster by Earl Grey, at the solicitation of his father, but had since quarrelled with him and been forbidden the court: he now returned, and was said to have taken an active interest in the formation of the new administration. But the difficulties of the situation were insuperable. Even Sir R. Inglis and Mr. Davies Gilbert, two of the strongest Tories in the country, denounced the attempt to form an anti-reform ministry to pass a modified Reform Bill. For a moment the duke thought of maintaining his position by military force, but he found that even the army could not be relied on; and having exhausted all his efforts and resources, he wisely yielded before the

storm burst forth. Mr. Baring, who throughout these transactions had acted as the mouthpiece of the proposed ministry in the House of Commons, announced, in his place in that House, amidst the loud cheers of the majority, that the commission given to the Duke of Wellington for the formation of a ministry was at an end.

Nothing, then, was left for the king but to yield to the general wish of his people. It was evident that not only were the lower classes almost to a man in favour of the bill, but that increasing numbers of the upper and middle classes desired that it should be passed speedily and without any considerable change. The king's popularity was now completely gone. He was no longer "the patriot king" or the "sailor king." Dirt was thrown into his carriage as he came up to London; he was received in the metropolis with hisses, groans, execrations, and obscene outcries, and was with difficulty protected from personal violence by the Guards who surrounded his carriage.

Earl Grey at once obeyed his sovereign's summons, accompanied as usual by Lord Brougham. The king received them with evident ill-humour, and, contrary to his usual practice, kept them standing during the interview. But he at once consented to the creation of as many peers as the ministry might think necessary to enable them to carry the Reform Bill through the House of Lords, with the understanding that this power was not to be exercised until every means of avoiding the necessity for its employment had been tried; a condition which the two lords readily accepted.

The same evening, Sir Herbert Taylor, who was present at this interview, wrote a circular note to the most active of the opposition lords, in which he informed them that all difficulties to the arrangements in progress would be obviated by a declaration in the House of Lords, from a sufficient number of peers, that in consequence of the present state of affairs they had come to the resolution of dropping their opposition to the Reform Bill, so that it might pass without delay, and as nearly as possible in its present shape.

On the evening on which this letter was written the Duke of Wellington, after giving a full explanation of the share he had taken in the transactions which had followed Earl Grey's resignation, withdrew from the House, and did not appear in it again until the day after the passing of the Reform Bill.

Lord Harewood, after bitterly complaining that the independence of the House was destroyed, announced his intention of withdrawing from farther opposition; and a large number of peers

followed his example. A small minority, disregarding the king's request, still offered a pertinacious opposition to its progress, and, if they did not succeed in their endeavours, at least had the satisfaction of venting their indignation in no measured terms. Here is a specimen scene. In the course of a discussion on the enfranchisement of Oldham, Lord Kenyon exclaimed—

“The bill will be the destruction of the monarchy. By forcing this measure on his reluctant sovereign, the noble earl has placed the king in a situation in which he could make no choice of a minister; and his advice to exercise his prerogative in so unconstitutional a manner as to destroy the independence of this House is abandoned and atrocious——”

Earl Grey (interrupting, with great warmth and amidst vehement cheering): “Atrocious! my lords. I put it to your lordships, is it consistent with the usages of this House, or with ordinary propriety, that the noble lord should apply such words to me? For my part, I can only reject the words with contempt and scorn.”

Lord Kenyon: “I repeat that I think such conduct most abandoned and atrocious. Whether the noble lord be pleased or not with my using the word *atrocious*, the privileges of the House have not been abrogated to such an extent that the noble earl can prevent me from saying that I shall always feel that it was the most atrocious act of the minister to give such advice to the king.”

Earl Grey: “Anything more unparliamentary, disorderly, and atrocious than the applying of such words to me, I never heard in this House. It is for the House to act as may seem befitting its own dignity; but for me, all that remains to me is to throw back those words with the utmost scorn, contempt, and indignation.”

After some farther bickerings, the Duke of Cumberland interposed as a peacemaker, and the business proceeded. In six days the bill went through committee. On the 4th of June it was read a third time and passed, 106 peers voting for it, and only 22 against it. Lords Wharncliffe and Harrowby, by whose assistance the second reading was carried, evidently thought that they had been duped, and took the opportunity afforded them by the debate on the third reading of giving loud utterance to their disappointment and indignation.

On the 5th of June the amendments introduced into the bill by the House of Lords were agreed to by the Lower House. A long discussion took place, which had very little reference to the question before the House. In the course of it, Sir R. Peel made the following remarks, to which subsequent events gave peculiar interest

and significance: "Whenever government come to deal with the corn laws, the precedent formed by the present occasion will be appealed to; and if they should be placed in similar circumstances of difficulty and excitement, the danger to the public tranquillity will be made a plea for overturning the independence of the House of Lords." Little did he then dream that when the dire consummation, which he thus lugubriously predicted, arrived, he himself, by the aid of a reformed House of Commons, would constrain a reluctant House of Lords to sanction the abolition of the corn laws, and the subversion of the policy with which they were identified. It was also in the course of this debate that Lord J. Russell made the celebrated "finality" declaration, so often referred to as a proof that he and his colleagues were pledged to resist any attempt to carry farther than they had done by their bill the reform of the House of Commons. His words were these: "I think that, so far as ministers are concerned, this is a final measure. I declared, on the second reading of the bill, that if only a part of the measure were carried, it would lead to new agitations; that is now avoided by the state in which the bill has come from the other House."

The measure thus at length adopted by the legislature swept away 56 nomination boroughs, returning 112 members, and semi-disfranchised thirty more; making a sum total of disfranchisement of 142 seats in the Lower House of Parliament. It gave the counties sixty-five additional representatives, and conferred the right of sending members to the House of Commons on Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham, and thirty-nine other large and flourishing towns previously unrepresented. On the other hand, it greatly impaired the direct influence of the working classes in the elections, by diminishing the number of the franchises in Preston and other towns, where, before the Reform Bill was carried, the suffrage was nearly universal.

Nothing now remained in order to give the bill the force of law but the formal assent of the king. It was earnestly hoped that he would have given it in person; had he done so, he would probably have recovered a considerable portion of the popularity he had lost. His ministers implored him to go down to the House of Lords; the reform journals urged him to attend, and promised a most enthusiastic reception, which unquestionably would have been given to him; for the people, now that their wishes were gratified, were quite prepared to forgive his past conduct. But the treatment he had received after Lord Grey's resignation, and the abuse with which he had been loaded by the reform press, had

made a deep impression on his mind, and he peremptorily refused to give his assent in person. It was consequently given by commission. The ministerial benches were crowded: those usually occupied by the opposition were empty. A single prelate, Dr. Maltby, the new bishop of Chichester, represented the episcopal bench. The speaker, followed by all the members present except Sir R. H. Inglis, went up to the House of Lords, and announced on his return that the royal consent had been given to the bill. The announcement was received in silence, and the absence of the king gave rise to gloomy presentiments. The bill had now become law, but its results remained to be seen. The agitation which the struggle had caused, and the passions it had roused, had by no means subsided; and the state of the public mind was such as to give rise to anxious forebodings, even in the hearts of the most sanguine supporters of the measure.

On the 21st of September in this year there passed away in peace one whose name is still a household word, whose works adorn almost every library, and are read with almost the same eager delight that they excited when they first appeared. Clouds and darkness overshadowed the last years of Sir Walter Scott's life, and the Reform Bill, so full of hope to some of his contemporaries, seemed to him big with disaster and despair. But he bore up under all with a cheerfulness that neither poverty, nor pain, nor illness, nor the apprehension of evil to come, could quench. No man perhaps ever more completely transfused his own noble and generous character into his works, and therefore it is needless to say more of him; but it would have been unpardonable in one who attempts to write the history of the year 1832 to pass unremarked the departure of so great and good a man.

CHAPTER V.

THE FIRST REFORMED PARLIAMENT.

THE struggle was at last over ; but the emotions it had excited, like the ground-swell after the storm, still continued to agitate the public mind. The reformers, flushed with victory, made preparations for the coming contest with a vigour and enthusiasm which insured success. Many of them looked forward to the almost immediate introduction of universal suffrage, vote by ballot, annual parliaments ; to the disestablishment of the church ; and to various other great and organic changes, which they imagined would at once follow the immense increase of popular power which had been effected by the great bill. Others, more moderate, or more timid, gave their support to the government, which had announced that they regarded the bill which they had succeeded in carrying as a final measure, not indeed altogether precluding other important changes, but intended to determine the constitution of the House of Commons for the generation in which it was adopted. On the other hand, the Tories, or, as they now began to be called, the Conservatives, were filled with alarm and despair, thinking that the extreme measures which were at the moment so popular would speedily be adopted, and that reform would develop into anarchy and revolution. But the long interval which necessarily elapsed before the struggle between the two parties could be renewed at the hustings and the polling-booth enabled them in some degree to recover their drooping spirits. They had still a great superiority over their opponents in wealth and influence, and they hoped that by a large expenditure of money, they might return a formidable phalanx to sit on the opposition benches and obstruct and delay, as far as possible, the measures they dreaded. They knew that if the majorities by which any measure which the conservative party

resisted was carried in the House of Commons were not very large, the Lords would be sure to reject it, or so amend it as to render it in their opinion almost innocuous. The revision of the registers passed off quietly, and served to calm down still farther the passions which the reform struggle had so powerfully excited. The revising barristers generally adopted the most liberal construction of the statute, and retained on the register the names of all persons claiming votes who were not distinctly shown to be disqualified. The revision, however, proved, as all parties had anticipated, that the vast majority of those on whom the Reform Bill had conferred the elective franchise were supporters of the government by which that measure had been introduced and carried.

It was near the end of the year 1832 when the elections commenced, and they were not completed until after the beginning of the year 1833. The machinery of the bill fully answered the hopes and expectations of its authors. The revision had greatly facilitated the taking of the votes, as the only thing now to be ascertained was whether the persons tendering them had their names on the register. The separation of the polling-places divided the mob, prevented disturbances, or facilitated the repression of them. The diminution of the time over which the polling extended was a still greater improvement. In the place of fourteen days of turmoil, drunkenness, and riot, there were now only two days at the most; and though the state of towns during the elections was still far from being what was desirable, comparative tranquillity prevailed. Of course the ministerial party was the one which gained chiefly by the dissolution. The conservative party, whose ranks had been so greatly thinned by two successive dissolutions, suffered fresh losses by the present election. The rotten boroughs, which had been their strongholds, were now disfranchised, and the new constituencies naturally showed their gratitude to their political creators by generally returning representatives of the Whig party. Nevertheless, their losses were less disastrous than might have been anticipated, and they were able to boast that they had gained some victories where defeat seemed to be inevitable. A remnant of the great party that carried General Gascoyne's amendment occupied the opposition benches. Mr. Baring, one of the most uncompromising opponents of the Reform Bill, was returned for the county of Essex. Sir R. Vyvian, whose hostility to the measure had not been less marked, represented Bristol. Lord Sandon was elected by the still more important constituency of Liverpool. But these triumphs, dearly bought, were balanced by very serious losses. Sir C.

Wetherell, the ablest lawyer and the most effective speaker of the high Tory party, was rejected at Oxford. Sir E. Sugden, afterwards Lord St. Leonards, lost his seat at Cambridge. Mr. Croker had declared that he would never sit in a House of Commons elected under the Reform Bill, and he kept his word. The radicals, who had expected to gain most largely in this election, were disappointed in their hopes. It is true that Cobbett, rejected at Manchester, found an asylum at Oldham; but Hunt lost his election at Preston. In most of the boroughs, especially the larger ones, the partizans of the ministers triumphed. Here and there a large conservative proprietor was able to force himself or his nominee on a borough in or near which his property was situated. In the counties the influence of the nobility and of the large landed proprietors secured for the conservatives a fair share of the representation. In Scotland, out of the fifty-three members, forty were ministerialists, ten conservatives, and three radicals. In Ireland, where O'Connell at this moment wielded an enormous power, a large proportion of his followers—men favourable to the repeal of the union, and ready to lend their support to the most violent measures—were chosen. On the whole, the results of the election answered the expectations of prudent and moderate reformers. Its effect was to increase considerably the larger number of supporters of the government which the last House of Commons had contained, and to make it one of the strongest administrations that had ever existed in England.

The first reformed parliament was opened by commission on the 29th of January, 1833. Of course the first object that occupied the attention of the House of Commons was the choice of a speaker. The late speaker, Mr. Manners Sutton, was proposed by Lord Morpeth and seconded by Sir F. Burdett; Mr. Littlton, in spite of his own remonstrances, and the strong support he gave to the claims of his rival, was proposed by Mr. Hume and seconded by Mr. O'Connell. On a division, 241 members gave their votes to Mr. Sutton, while only 31 supported his involuntary opponent.

The king's speech recommended to parliament the careful consideration of the questions of the renewal of the charters of the Bank of England and of the East India Company; of the temporalities of the church, especially with regard to tithes, the collection of which had become very difficult, and caused very bitter disputes. The correction of the abuses of the church, a more equitable distribution of her revenues, and a just commutation of tithes in Ireland, were strongly recommended. The king also requested the two

Houses to confer on the government additional powers for the repression of disorders in Ireland, and expressed in energetic terms his determination to maintain the legislative union between the two countries, as being "indissolubly connected with the peace, security, and welfare of his people."

Ireland was in a condition that demanded the earnest attention of the legislature, as the following statement of atrocities and horrors, submitted to the House of Lords by the first minister of the crown, shows.

"Between the 1st of January and the end of December, 1832, the number of homicides was 242; of robberies, 1179; of burglaries, 401; of burnings, 568; of houghing cattle, 290; of serious assaults, 161; of riots, 203; of illegal reviews, 353; of illegal notices, 2094; of illegal meetings, 427; of injuries to property, 796; of attacks on houses, 723; of firing with intent to kill, 328; of robbery of arms, 117; of administering unlawful oaths, 163; of resistance to legal process, 8; of turning-up land, 20; of resistance to tithes, 50; taking forcible possession, 2; making altogether a total of 9002 crimes committed in one year, and all crimes connected with and growing out of the disturbed state of the country. I must unfortunately also state to your lordships that this system is in a state of progression, and is increasing rather than diminishing. I will not go farther into the details; but merely state a comparison between the three months ending with September—that is, July, August, and September—and the three ending with December, that is October, November, and December. The total number of crimes committed in the first three months was 1279; the total number committed in the last three months was 1646.*

A bill was accordingly brought into the Upper House by Earl Grey, giving the lord-lieutenant power to proclaim disturbed districts, to substitute courts-martial for the ordinary courts of justice under certain limitations and restrictions, the chief of which was that such courts should not try offences to which the penalty of death was attached without special authorization from the lord-lieutenant, and that even then they should not have the power of inflicting any sentence more severe than transportation, the court-martial to be assisted by a king's counsel or serjeant-at-law, who should act as judge-advocate. All persons absent from their houses between sunset and sunrise were punishable by these courts. Powers were also given to enter houses for the purpose of searching

* Hansard, 1833, vol. i. p. 733.

for arms and ammunition; and punishing persons not producing them when inquired for. The distribution of seditious papers also made a punishable offence. And lastly, the Habeas Corpus Act was to be virtually suspended within the limits of the proclaimed districts; but persons apprehended were to be brought to trial within the space of three calendar months, or discharged from confinement.

In the House of Lords this bill passed through all its stages without a single division. In the House of Commons it was viewed with great dislike not only by the followers of O'Connell, but by the radical party, and by many of those who generally supported the government. The bill came down from the House of Lords on the 22nd of February, but the first reading of it was postponed to the 27th. No sooner was this delay gained than Mr. O'Connell gave notice that he should move for a call of the House, and renew that motion as often as he perceived any diminution of its effect, as long as the bill was before the House. The government carried the bill through its different stages, with the exception of one clause, in which the majority displayed their hostility to the church in spite of the remonstrances of the government, by providing that no district should be proclaimed only on account of the resistance which was offered in it to the payment of tithes. On the 29th of March the bill was read a third time by a majority of 345 to 80, and passed the House of Commons. On its return to the Upper House, great dissatisfaction was expressed at some of the changes which the Commons had made in it, and more especially at the last-mentioned proviso, which, it was urged, would be regarded by the Irish as an encouragement held out by parliament to that resistance to the collection of tithe which was long offered in almost every part of Ireland. Earl Grey and Lord Brougham admitted that the proviso was a very objectionable one, and regretted its introduction into the bill; but they both argued that in point of fact it would prove absolutely innocuous, and declared that under the bill the same protection would be given to the collection of tithe that was afforded to the collection of every other kind of property. The Earl of Harrowby, in order to take away from the clause the invidious character which the amendment had imported into it, proposed to add a farther proviso, to the effect that no district should be proclaimed on account of the non-payment of rent or taxes. The House of Lords, however, rejected, by a majority of 85 to 45, an amendment which might have caused farther delay in bringing the measure into operation.

No sooner was the bill passed than it was put in force in the county of Kilkenny, with very satisfactory results. A list of offences committed during the month of March which preceded the passing of the measure, and the month of May that followed its introduction, showed that even in that short interval the total number of offences perpetrated had diminished from 472 to 162, without the holding of a single court-martial, and without applying any of those provisions of the act which had been most strongly opposed in the House of Commons. The volunteers, a body of men who had hitherto contributed largely to disturb the tranquillity of the county, were dissolved by proclamation, and disbanded without resistance. The working of the bill was greatly aided by another bill which empowered the Court of King's Bench to change the venue to an adjoining county or to Dublin, in cases where there was reason to expect that intimidation would be practised against prosecutors, jurors, or witnesses in the county itself.

We have already intimated that the ministers of the crown had determined that the coercive measures which they felt compelled to propose should be accompanied, or speedily followed, by healing measures. The grievance of which the discontented party in Ireland complained most loudly was the hardship of being obliged to pay tithes and cess for the support of a church in which they did not believe, and which they regarded as a badge of subjection.

The ministry on the other hand were anxious, both from political principle and sincere religious conviction, to strengthen it by removing its abuses, and so mitigating the hostility with which it was regarded by the bulk of the Irish population. The bill enacted that the bishops' lands, which were of great extent and for the most part leased at very low rents, should be sold; and the proceeds of the sales should be vested in ecclesiastical commissioners, who were to pay over to the bishops the same amounts as they received before the passing of the measure, and to apply the surplus to the purposes directed by the bill. In the next place, it was proposed that the number of bishops in Ireland should be reduced from twenty-two to twelve, and the number of archbishops from four to two. The future bishops were to be paid stipends, which, though ample and even excessive, were considerably lower than those of the present holders of the sees. Lastly, the bill proposed to lay on the holders of benefices a graduated tax, in lieu of the first-fruits, to which they had been subject hitherto. It was intended, in the first instance, that this tax should be levied on the clergy already beneficed; but it was subsequently determined that this provision should only apply

to their successors. The bill, as at first introduced, provided that a portion of the funds obtained by the improved management of the bishops' lands should be appropriated to non-ecclesiastical purposes. It was urged, that though the church might rightfully claim all property which she at present possessed, parliament might with no less reason claim the disposal of additional funds raised through powers conferred by her, to such purposes as she might deem useful and fitting. This clause of the bill was highly acceptable to the repealers and to the English radicals, by whom it was regarded as a precedent for the secularization of ecclesiastical property, which they hoped would be applied not only to the Irish but also to the English establishment. But for this very reason the proposed appropriation was disliked, not only by the conservatives but also by a large section of the ministerial party, which was strongly opposed to any measure calculated to injure or weaken it, and especially to a concession which seemed to them likely to substitute a new Catholic domination for the old Protestant ascendancy.

In the cabinet itself there was a strong opposition to it. The premier disliked it, the Earl of Ripon was even more averse to it. Mr. Stanley was vehemently opposed to it. With him Sir James Graham, the first Lord of the Admiralty, warmly sympathised : and even most of those ministers who favoured its retention regarded it as a sad necessity—as a sacrifice that must be made in order to restore peace and tranquillity to Ireland. The whole cabinet, too, was well aware that the clause would certainly be rejected by the Lords, and they wished to avoid a renewal of the state of things which had occurred during the reform struggle. They therefore determined to move the omission of this very important provision. They were not, however, allowed to make this change without violent protests and strong remonstrances from the party that regarded the expunged clause as the most valuable portion of the measure. O'Connell denounced its withdrawal as the basest act which a national assembly could sanction. But the large government majority enabled ministers to defy all opposition.

Notwithstanding the concession which had been made by the ministry, a very formidable resistance to the bill was offered in the Upper House. An amendment proposed by the Archbishop of Canterbury respecting the appropriation of the revenues of suspended benefices was carried by a majority of two. The ministers suspended the progress of the bill in order to deliberate on the course they should adopt. It was a question with the cabinet whether they should give in their resignations, which would no doubt have pro-

duced a crisis similar to that which had occurred when they adopted that course in 1832. After some consideration, however, they determined to go on with the measure, which was carried through its remaining stages without any very material alteration.

The question of Irish tithe imperiously called for settlement. Hitherto it had been collected at the point of the bayonet, and it was rapidly becoming uncollectable even in that way. Almost every attempt to enforce the payment of the obnoxious impost was followed by an affray. Sometimes policemen were killed—sometimes peasants. The clergy who attempted to enforce their rights, the men who paid what was due, were assassinated, or lived in continual dread of assassination. Under these circumstances, the collection of tithes through the greater part of Ireland had become impossible. Many of the clergy, who were dependent on them for the support of their families, were reduced to the greatest distress, and in some instances brought almost to the verge of starvation. In 1831 and 1832 government had striven to put an end to a state of things so intolerable. They had advanced a million as a loan to the clergy. They had attempted to transfer the collection of tithes to the government, and to commute the tithe into a land-tax. But all these expedients failed. The opposition to the tithe was still so great that, though payment of some portion was obtained with great difficulty, the cost of collection exceeded the sum levied. It seemed as though, if England would persist in maintaining a Protestant establishment in Ireland, she would be compelled to sustain it at her own cost. The pressure of other business and the difficulty of dealing with this matter obliged the government to postpone the question, till it could be more maturely considered in all its bearings, determining to grapple with the difficulties that beset it in the next session.

The time had now arrived when ministers would be compelled to show how far they were prepared to satisfy the highly raised expectations of the people with regard to retrenchment and economy. Hitherto their shortcomings in this respect had been condoned on the ground of the formidable opposition with which they had to contend, and of the manner in which their time and attention had been engrossed by the Reform Bill. But now that a reformed House of Commons was sitting, the overwhelming majority of whose members were deeply pledged to those reductions which the Whig party when out of office had strenuously advocated, such excuses could no longer be made for the government. It was not indeed possible that expectations such as those that had been raised should be satisfied.

Something however was done to meet them. It was announced that the present administration had abolished 1387 places, the total amount of salaries attached to which was 231,406*l.*; but from this amount a sum of 38,000*l.* had to be deducted for retiring allowances, thus leaving a net saving of about 192,000*l.* In the diplomatic service a saving of 91,735*l.* had been effected: but of this amount 34,000*l.* was due to the regulations which had been introduced into that service by Lord Aberdeen during the Wellington administration, and of which therefore the present ministry could not claim the credit. In the revenue department a saving of 28,000*l.* had been secured by bringing 500 persons from the retired list into active service.

The income of the year ending April 5th, 1833, was 46,835,000*l.*, the expenditure 45,366,000*l.*; leaving an excess of income over expenditure of 1,469,000*l.* The minister proposed to take advantage of this surplus to abolish the duty on tiles, to reduce the duties on marine insurances, advertisements, houses, windows in shops, cotton, and soap. These reductions, it was calculated, would leave a surplus of 516,000*l.* There was nothing very brilliant in these financial operations—nothing to distinguish the budget of the Whig ministry very strikingly from those of preceding administrations, or meet the expectations which were entertained throughout the country of the savings that were to be effected by a reform ministry and a reformed parliament. Diligent, assiduous, economical Mr. Hume was deeply disappointed, and urged that the reductions should at least be pushed to the full extent of the surplus. Sir R. Peel, on the other hand, contended that the chancellor of the exchequer by leaving so small a surplus endangered the public credit, and ran the risk of involving the country in an expenditure very far exceeding the amount of the proposed reductions. And not only was the budget unsatisfactory to the parties whom these two financiers represented, but their dissatisfaction was shared by many supporters of ministers in the House and in the country. The consideration of the details of the budget was deferred to a later period of the session.

Sir W. Ingilby proposed that the duty on malt should be reduced from 1*l.* 0*s.* 8*d.* to 10*s.* per quarter. In favour of this proposition he urged, that it would alleviate the agricultural distress, about which so much had been said in the king's speeches and elsewhere, would benefit the landlord and the farmer, and would also be of great advantage to the public generally, by supplying them with cheap beer; and all this with very slight loss to the revenue, because the reduction of the price would double the consumption.

Lord Althorp replied that the success of the motion would involve a loss to the revenue of 2,500,000*l.*, and he had no security that any great and immediate increase in the consumption would ensue, so as to diminish to any considerable extent this large defalcation, and he could not see any means by which a substitute for the tax could be obtained, that would not be more unsatisfactory than the tax itself. It would be impossible that the service of the country could be provided for, or the interest of the debt paid, if the House should consent to sacrifice so large an amount of the taxation of the country, unless the House would consent to a property-tax, or devise some other tax as a substitute for that on malt. Sir W. Ingilby's motion was nevertheless carried by a majority of 162 to 152.

Ministers appeared at the time to accept this defeat with a good grace. Farther consideration, however, satisfied them that it would be very unadvisable to attempt to carry out the resolution. It was resolved to get rid of it by a side wind. Accordingly, on the 29th of April, Lord Althorp gave notice of an amendment on a motion of Sir J. Key, for the repeal of the house and window taxes, converting it into a motion for the reimposition of the duty which Sir W. Ingilby's motion had taken off. The supporters of that motion loudly complained of this as a violation of the assurance which had been given to the House by Lord Althorp when the motion was carried; and certainly the expressions which the chancellor of the exchequer was reported to have used seemed to justify the complaint. They appealed to the House not to submit to the dictation of Lord Althorp, and not to undo a resolution which a few days before they had so deliberately adopted. Ministers, however, had no course open to them but to press their proposal, which was carried by 285 votes to 131. Thus Sir W. Ingilby's proposition, which had before been passed by a majority of ten, was now set aside by a majority of 162. Nevertheless, he persisted, and moved for leave to bring in a bill founded on his resolution; but the motion was rejected by 258 votes to 162.

Great efforts were made to get rid of the house and window taxes, which were very unpopular in the metropolis and the great towns of the empire, and very objectionable on sanitary grounds; but these attempts were defeated by the steady determination of the chancellor of the exchequer to oppose a change which would utterly derange his budget, or compel him to resort to a tax on property. With equal firmness, government resisted all the efforts made by Mr. Hume and the rest of the radical party, to obtain the abolition of pensions and sinecures, and a large reduction of our land and sea

forces. Their conduct in regard to these measures produced a very marked diminution of the popularity which they had enjoyed from the time of the introduction of the Reform Bill. A strong agitation was set on foot for the repeal of the assessed taxes. Crowded and enthusiastic meetings were holden in all parts of the metropolis. The Birmingham Political Union, which had so ardently supported the government at every emergency during the struggle for reform, now declared against them. Resolutions were passed by that body denouncing them as having betrayed the confidence of the people, and praying his majesty to dismiss them, as having "proved themselves utterly unable or unwilling to extricate the country from the difficulties with which it is surrounded." A public meeting was appointed to be holden on an open space near the Coldbath-fields prison, "for the purpose of adopting preparatory measures for holding a national convention, as the only means of obtaining and securing the rights of the people;" in other words, for the purpose of overturning the government, and substituting another for it. A proclamation from the home office prohibited the meeting as illegal and dangerous to the public peace. Nevertheless it assembled at the appointed time. The new police—a force at that time recently established, and very unpopular with the working classes, accustomed only to the mild inefficiency of the old constabulary—were ordered to disperse the meeting. They were accused of having acted with unnecessary violence. One of them was stabbed by a dagger and killed, another was severely wounded. The coroner's jury that sat on the body of the murdered policeman returned a verdict of justifiable homicide, which was quashed by the Court of King's Bench, as being utterly unwarranted by the evidence. Nevertheless, the murderer when tried was acquitted, in spite of the instructions of the judge, and in the face of the clearest proofs of his guilt.

It was, perhaps, a fortunate circumstance that the charters of the Bank of England and of the East India Company expired in the very first year that a reformed House of Commons sat at Westminster. This afforded the government an opportunity not only of reviewing its relations with the bank and the system on which this institution was conducted, but of revising the whole banking system of the country. After due and careful negotiations with the governors of the bank, they determined to propose to parliament a renewal of its charter on the following conditions:—

1. That its promissory notes were to be made a legal tender for sums of 5*l.* and upwards.

2. That one fourth part of the debt of 14,000,000*l.* at present

due by the public to the bank should be repaid during the present session of parliament.

3. That the allowances hitherto made to the bank for the management of the national debt and other public business should be continued, subject to a deduction of 120,000*l.* a year.

4. That the laws restricting the interest of money to 5*l.* per cent., which were commonly called the "usury laws," should be repealed so far as concerned bills not having more than three months to run before they became due.

5. That royal charters should be granted for the establishment of joint-stock banks within a certain distance of London, it being, however, understood that government was at liberty to withhold such charter, if it should in any case deem it advisable to reject the application for it.

6. That all banks should enter into a composition, in lieu of stamp duties at present chargeable, at the rate of 7*s.* for every 100*l.* issued in notes.

7. That a bill should be introduced into parliament to regulate country banks, the provisions of which should be such as to encourage joint-stock banking companies in the country to issue the notes of the Bank of England.

This plan was embodied in eight resolutions, which were moved on the 1st of June. An effort made, chiefly by those who wished to abolish the charter altogether, to postpone the consideration of the question till the next session, was defeated by a large majority. That part of the plan which provided for the establishment of joint-stock banks having been dropped for the present by the government, the other resolutions were carried, and a bill founded on them passed both Houses with some changes, the most important of which was that which provided for the quarterly publication of the bank accounts. This was an innovation of the highest value and importance. It enabled not only the government, but financiers and economists of all classes, in and out of parliament, to watch the monetary operations of the country.

Never perhaps in the history of the world had any government or any legislature been called on to deal with so important a question as that which was involved in the renewal of the East India Company's charter. They were to decide on the future administration of an empire which, including the territory directly or indirectly under the rule of the company, extended over a million and a half of square miles, contained not very far from two hundred millions of inhabitants, and had a seaboard of more than four thousand

miles, from the mouth of the Indus to the mouth of the Ganges. The House was called upon to decide how this vast and rich country was to be governed and traded with for the next twenty years. It was a fortunate circumstance that a reformed parliament had been elected before the question of the renewal of the company's charter was decided, otherwise the directors of this great company, and other persons interested in the maintenance of the monopolies and abuses connected with it, would in all probability have returned to parliament, by means of rotten boroughs, a party of adherents sufficiently large to have effectually prevented the government and the House of Commons from dealing with this great question in the manner which the interests of England and India alike demanded. A bare examination of the leading changes which were effected will be sufficient to show how much they were influenced by the existence of a liberal government and a reformed parliament. The company enjoyed, under certain restrictions imposed upon it by previous charters, a monopoly of the Chinese and Indian trade. At the renewal of its charter in 1813, it had been required to publish its commercial accounts separately from its territorial accounts. This was a most important regulation, for it showed beyond all doubt that the Indian and Chinese trades could be carried on better by private merchants than by the company. It was therefore stripped entirely of its commercial attributes, and became henceforth a corporation for ruling British India, under the control of the British government. The restrictions on the entrance of Europeans into the country under the company's authority were swept away. Offices under the government were thrown open to natives and foreigners; distinctions based on differences of race, colour, and religion were abolished. Henceforward India was to be governed for the Indians, and not for the English only. The measure was received with great favour. It was strenuously opposed in the Upper House by Lord Ellenborough, and in the Lower House by Mr. Silk Buckingham, a gentleman who had been returned for Sheffield, but who, notwithstanding a commanding presence and a fluent eloquence, enjoyed no influence in the House, and on this occasion found himself without a supporter. This complaisant acceptance of the government measure was due as much to the ignorance or indifference of honourable members with regard to Indian questions as to the intrinsic merits of the bill; but showed what might have been effected in defence of the abuses of the company by a small and well-organized band of monopolists in the House of Commons. It shows, too, how far England had

moved away from that system by means of which corruption at home sheltered far worse corruption abroad, and under which, in the energetic language of Burke, "the lawbreakers of India became the lawmakers of England."

But greatly as these measures redounded to the credit of the Grey ministry, that which they brought forward and carried through for the abolition of slavery in the West Indies did them still higher honour, and shed a lustre on the session in which, and the parliament by which, it was adopted. But the credit belongs above all to the English people, and especially to the English working classes, whose strong feeling on this point made itself felt in a reformed parliament as it had never been felt before. On the 14th of May Mr. Stanley, as colonial secretary, moved the following resolutions, which embodied his plan:—

"1. That it is the opinion of the committee, that immediate and effectual measures be taken for the entire abolition of slavery throughout the colonies, under such provisions for regulating the condition of the negroes as may combine their welfare with the interests of the proprietors.

"2. That it is expedient, that all children born after the passing of any act, or who shall be under the age of six years at the time of passing any act of parliament for this purpose, be declared free; subject, nevertheless, to such temporary restrictions as may be deemed necessary for their support and maintenance.

"3. That all persons now slaves be entitled to be registered as apprenticed labourers, and to acquire thereby all the rights and privileges of freemen, subject to the restriction of labouring under conditions, and for a time to be fixed by parliament, for their present owners.

"4. That to provide against the risk of loss which proprietors in his majesty's colonial possessions might sustain by the abolition of slavery, his majesty be enabled to advance, by way of loan, to be raised from time to time, a sum, not exceeding in the whole 15,000,000*l.*, to be repaid in such manner and at such a rate of interest as shall be prescribed by parliament.

"5. That his majesty be enabled to defray any such expense as he may incur in establishing an efficient stipendiary magistracy in the colonies, and in aiding the local legislatures in providing for the religious and moral education of the negro population to be emancipated."

The two first of these resolutions were adopted without any division, but not without much debate; but the third was opposed

by the most earnest friends of emancipation, headed by Mr. Buxton himself. He insisted that this part of the ministerial plan was founded on a fallacy, inasmuch as it was framed on a supposition that the emancipated slaves would not be induced to work by wages. He brought forward a variety of facts to prove that when left to themselves they not only readily worked for wages, but that their labour was much more valuable when they were stimulated to it by the hope of a pecuniary recompense than when they were goaded on to it by compulsion and the fear of punishment.

Lord Howick also, who had resigned the office of secretary of the colonies on account of the objection he entertained to this part of the ministerial scheme, declared that it would be neither more nor less than an entire subversion of the existing relations of society in the colonies, and that the negroes would be in a worse condition at the termination of the experiment than they were at its commencement.

The other side was taken by the members of government and their supporters, conspicuous among whom was the brilliant Macaulay, the influence of whose genius was vastly increased by the fact that he was the son of Zachary Macaulay, one of the foremost of the noble band of pioneers who, with Wilberforce, Clarkson, and Brougham, had fought the battle of emancipation at a time when the cause was unpopular and victory far off. They earnestly contended that the step from slavery to apprenticeship was a great forward stride. The duration of the apprenticeship was a matter of comparatively little consequence, provided only that it was interposed as an interval of transition between slavery and perfect liberty. It recognised the rights of property, conferred freedom from corporal punishment, secured respect for the domestic ties of the negro in his closest and tenderest relations, and a considerable share of the produce of his labour.

These arguments induced Mr. Buxton to withdraw his amendment, on receiving an assurance that this resolution left open the question of the duration of the apprenticeship; but he proposed to insert words which would have the effect of securing that the labour should be for wages. This amendment he also consented to withdraw; but Mr. O'Connell, his seconder, pressed it to division, and it was rejected by 324 votes to 40.

To the next resolution, which proposed a loan of 15,000,000*l.* to the planters, as a compensation for the loss of their slaves, a strong opposition was offered by the West India interest, as the party in parliament which espoused the cause of the planters was termed.

Ministers, fearing a defeat, consented to convert the proposed loan of 15,000,000*l.* into a gift of the enormous sum of 20,000,000*l.* The remaining resolution passed without any division; and the resolutions having been carried up to the House of Lords were there adopted without alteration. A bill based on them was brought in, went quietly through its various stages, with the single important change of a reduction of the term of predial apprenticeship from twelve years to seven, and that of nonpredial apprenticeship from seven to five years.

While the interests of the negro were thus championed, those of the white labourer were not forgotten. The hours of labour in the factories were not regulated by any law, and were excessively long. Not only men, but women and children, were compelled to toil for twelve hours a day, and sometimes even for longer periods. The consequence was, that the inhabitants of the manufacturing districts of Lancashire and Yorkshire, who had been some of the finest in the kingdom, were becoming a dwarfed, stunted, and deformed race. Recruiting sergeants complained that, though towns and villages had grown up in every direction, they could not find as many men fit to be admitted into the ranks of the army as they could before amongst the sparse population which dwelt amidst the moors, which were now becoming covered with houses, factories, shops, churches, chapels, schools, and mechanics' institutes. A strong agitation was carried on for the shortening of the duration of the hours of labour in factories. It was strenuously opposed by most of the employers, under the idea that it was an improper interference with their operations on the part of government, and that it would injure, if not destroy, their business. Political economists, too, victoriously demonstrated the mischief and impropriety of what the factory operatives and their friends in and out of parliament were asking for. Nevertheless, the agitation went forward. Mr. Sadler, member for Leeds, had in the year 1832 introduced into parliament a measure which embodied the views of those who took the lead in it. But the House of Commons at that time was too earnestly occupied with the reform struggle to be able to pay much attention to his representations; and the majority of that assembly were prejudiced against Mr. Sadler, who was a decided anti-reformer; so, for that session, the measure was thrust aside, and referred to a committee upstairs. In the election which took place after the passing of the Reform Bill, Mr. Sadler lost his seat. But the question fell into the hands of Lord Ashley, better known to this generation as the Earl of Shaftesbury. When the

bill had been read a second time, Lord Althorp opposed its farther progress, and moved that it should be referred to a select committee. But the strong government was not strong enough to withstand the feeling in favour of immediate legislation on this great question. It was decided, by a majority of 164 to 141, that Lord Ashley's bill should be submitted to a committee of the whole House.

In another instance the government was more successful. The bill, as brought in by Lord Ashley, provided that persons under eighteen years of age should not be allowed to work more than ten hours a day. The government substituted a provision limiting the labour of persons under fourteen years of age to eight hours a day. Thereupon Lord Ashley gave up the bill into the hands of Lord Althorp, by whom it was carried through. It enacted that persons under eighteen years of age should not be required to work more than sixty-nine hours in the week, and provided for the appointment of inspectors of factories, whose duty it would be to see that the provisions of the bill were carried out. This was a most valuable feature in the measure, as the reports made in accordance with it supplied the legislature with the information which subsequently enabled it to deal with the factory question in a more vigorous and satisfactory manner. The act also contained provision for the education of the children who were not to be employed more than eight hours a day, and thus paved the way for the introduction of that half-time system which has since been adopted with such happy results.

But while engaged with these acts of humanity and benevolence, parliament was not allowed to forget the humbler duty of endeavouring to carry forward those improvements in the constitution of which the great measure of last session was expected by the people to be only the commencement. It was soon found that the Reform Bill in removing one evil had aggravated another. It had put a stop to the sale of boroughs; it had not by any means put an end to the sale of votes. On the contrary, it soon appeared that the increase of the number of voters had been followed by an increase of bribery, corruption, and intimidation. The House of Commons, at the very commencement of the session, was besieged with petitions complaining of improper practices which had been employed at elections, and calling on it to endeavour to put a stop to them for the future. It was shown that at Liverpool, at Warwick, at Stafford, at Londonderry, and at many other places, bribery, corruption, and intimidation had been carried to scandalous

lengths, and it was felt that these practices ought to be severely repressed.

The remedy for these evils which most naturally suggested itself was the ballot. Mr. Grote, one of the members for the city of London, and the author of a well-known History of Greece, brought in a bill for the substitution of secret for open voting in parliamentary elections. Lord Althorp, who had formerly voted for the ballot, now opposed Mr. Grote's motion, on the ground that the Reform Bill had rendered it unnecessary, and that the malpractices complained of were not sufficiently numerous to render such a change desirable. Sir R. Peel insisted that the ballot would make the House of Commons more democratic, and in his opinion it was too democratic already; besides, he urged that they should wait and see how the Reform Bill worked before they introduced farther organic changes. The proposal was rejected by 211 votes, against 106 in favour of Mr. Grote's motion.

Another reform, which a large and influential portion of the party that supported ministers hoped to see speedily adopted, was a shortening of the duration of parliaments. Mr. Tennyson, the representative of the metropolitan borough of Lambeth, a man of high character, easy elocution, and great knowledge of parliamentary laws and customs, moved for leave to bring in a bill to revive the Triennial Act. The government objected to Mr. Tennyson's motion on various grounds. It was brought forward at too late a period in the session; it would prevent the great experiment of reform from having a fair trial; it was not as much needed now as it had been before the House of Commons was reformed; it was calculated to impair the power of the crown, which required to be maintained and supported; it would render members too dependent on the caprices of their constituents, and government too much exposed to the influence of the temporary and fluctuating passions of the people, as distinguished from their settled and fixed opinions. The motion was accordingly rejected, though the majority against it was only forty-nine.

Thus the Reform Bill escaped for the present those large and important modifications which most of its opponents had feared would speedily follow its adoption, and which many of its supporters deemed to be absolutely necessary to the completion of their triumph. Some minor changes were made in its details which the experience of its working at the last election had suggested.

The session was prolonged to the 29th of August, when it was brought to a close by the king in person. If it did not altogether

remove the apprehensions of the anti-reformers, at all events it completely disappointed their predictions of speedy ruin and revolution. If the reformed parliament had not accomplished all that the more sanguine reformers hoped for, it had adopted many great and important measures. It was accused, indeed, of violence and vulgarity; but, judged by what it did and what it abstained from doing, it certainly deserves a very different character. Never had any parliament effected greater things. Ireland tranquilized; West-Indian slavery abolished; the Charters of the Bank and of the East India Company renewed and greatly improved; a Factory Bill passed; the Reform Bill amended, and farther organic changes in the same direction for the present declined; bribery and corruption discouraged; important law reforms carried; the first step taken towards the establishment of a national system of education, by a grant of 20,000*l*. The exemplary patience and diligence of this parliament was not the least of its merits. The session of 1831, with all its long duration, obstructive delays, and endless speeches against time, gave 918 hours to its work, which was far more than had been given by any previous parliament, but in the session of 1833 it devoted no fewer than 1270 hours to its legislative duties.

While the reformed parliament was thus busy in its work of legislation, events of scarcely inferior importance were passing without its walls. Wilham Wilberforce, the eloquent advocate of negro emancipation, died on the eve of the triumph of the great measure he had so long and ably advocated. The world of science was astir under the new impulse given to scientific inquiry by the recent establishment of the British Association for the Advancement of Science. The ecclesiastical world was profoundly stirred, on the one hand by projects of church reform and the dread of religious liberalism, and on the other by the appearance of the Oxford Tracts, which maintained the divine mission and apostolical descent of the clergy, asserting that the Lord gave His Spirit to the apostles, who, in turn, laid their hands on those who should succeed them, and those again to others, and so the sacred gift had been handed down to the bishops of the Church of England, who had appointed the clergy of that church to be their assistants, and, in some sort, their representatives. The doctrines thus promulgated found much support in the formularies of the church, and particularly in her ordination services, and were received with much favour by many churchmen who regarded them as furnishing a new and powerful weapon of defence for the church against the advances of Popery on the one hand, and religious liberalism on the

other. They were vehemently opposed by a portion of the evangelical party, and by a little knot of liberal divines headed by Arnold, Whateley, and Hampden, the precursors of the Broad Church party. By the nonconformists they were regarded with feelings of strong and earnest disapproval. The success of the Tracts was much greater, and the outcry against them far louder and fiercer, than their authors had expected. But the support and the opposition they met with both tended to embolden them to speak out their opinions still more plainly and resolutely. The Tracts, which at the commencement had, as their name denoted, been small and simple, by degrees, as they proceeded, became large and learned theological treatises. Changes, too, came over the views of some of their writers. Doctrines which probably would have shocked them at first were put forward with a recklessness which success had increased. But these developments belong to a later period.

On the 4th of February, 1834, the king opened the second session of the reformed parliament. It was becoming every day more and more evident that the position of the Church in Ireland was one of the main causes, if not altogether the chief cause, of the discontent that prevailed there, and that nothing short of a radical change in this respect would give peace to Ireland, or enable the English government to dispense with those coercive enactments which the disturbed state of that country rendered necessary. Circumstances, too, were forcing on the consideration of the tithe question. All the expedients to which the government had resorted had proved unsuccessful. It had expended 26,000*l.* in collecting 12,000*l.*, and there seemed to be no likelihood that it would be more successful in future. An arrangement had been made between the government and the clergy, which would soon come to an end, and it was not likely, after such experience of its workings, that it would be renewed. The members of the government were at variance among themselves as to the course which should be adopted. They were all agreed in the determination to uphold the Established Church in Ireland. But as it was evident that by diminishing the incomes of the bishops and some of the dignitaries of the Church, by redistributing its funds, and by suppressing parishes which contained few or no Protestant parishioners, a considerable surplus could be obtained, some of them wished to apply it either to the payment of the Roman Catholic priesthood, or to the erection and maintenance of schools—proposals to which the other members of the cabinet would not listen for a moment, but which were sup-

ported by a strong party in the House of Commons and in the country, which was anxious to seize this opportunity of asserting the principle that parliament had a right to devote a portion of the funds of the Irish Church to purposes not strictly ecclesiastical, hoping that, if they could once get this principle distinctly recognized by the legislature, it would be easy to obtain farther applications of it, not only to the Irish, but also to the English Church. Accordingly, great interest was excited by a motion which Mr. Ward, member for St. Albans, brought forward, and which asserted the justice and necessity of immediately depriving the Irish Church of a portion of her temporalities.

In bringing forward his proposal, Mr Ward showed that the collection of tithe was the real cause of the disturbance and discontent that prevailed in Ireland. He also pointed out that the resistance offered to the payment of tithe had become well-nigh universal; that it extended to Protestants as well as Catholics, and existed in all parts of the country: he therefore argued that nothing but some change in the appropriation of the tithe could appease the discontent that prevailed, or produce even a momentary calm. The chief cause of the hatred with which this impost was regarded was, that while the great majority of those who paid it were Catholics, the purposes to which it was applied were exclusively Protestant; and this grievance could not be remedied by any change in the manner of collecting the impost. The present arrangement would expire on the first of November, and then the clergy must either return to the old system, or once more become a burden on the resources of this country. Military force and civil process had both been tried, and tried in vain. Between 1825 and 1832 the army maintained in Ireland had varied from 19,000 to 23,000, being as nearly as possible the same amount of force as was required for our Indian empire, and within one-third of the force that was required to occupy all our colonies in the other three quarters of the world. This army had cost the country during the last year upwards of a million of money, besides the annually increasing expense of a police force, amounting to nearly 300,000*l*. During the five preceding years 17,981 tithe cases had been heard annually in ecclesiastical courts and at quarter sessions before the assistant barristers. Large sums had been granted to schools and institutions which had Protestant proselytism for their object; but the religion of the people of Ireland seemed to be rendered dearer to them by every attempt made to shake its hold on their affections, and by the flagrant abuses of the established church itself, of which

none was more striking than the disproportion that existed between its wealth and the number of its members.

Mr. Ward brought forward returns showing that only about 600,000 persons, or not one-fourteenth of the population of Ireland, adhered to the communion of the established church there; and he endeavoured to prove that the revenues belonging to the church amounted, not, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer had calculated, to 600,000*l.*, but to a million, Lord Althorp having omitted in his estimate to reckon the value of the glebe lands, which Mr. Ward put down at 400,000*l.* or upwards. Another abuse of the Irish Church which Mr. Ward denounced was the unequal division of its revenues, and the enormous sums that were paid to rectors or vicars who had little or nothing to do. There were 176 benefices, the value of which varied from 800*l.* to 2,800*l.* per annum, 407 from 400*l.* to 800*l.* and 386 from 200*l.* to 400*l.* Again, non-residence prevailed to an extent that was not surprising considering how little the clergy had to do. It appeared that in 1814 there were 664 residents and 513 non-residents. in 1817, 665 residents and 544 non-residents; in 1819, 758 residents and 531 non-residents. Some of the resident clergy did duty for the most trifling remuneration, in some cases as low as 18*l.* a year, but the average was 70*l.* a year. And Mr. Ward forcibly asked: "What sort of a feeling is it calculated to create in Ireland when they see the actual work of that wealthy church done for a comparatively small sum?" He did not, however, propose to abolish this establishment altogether, but to do away with the glaring disparity that existed between the scales of duties and compensations. He would not give 800*l.* or 1000*l.* to the rector of a parish containing only ten or twelve Protestants, often the family of the rector or vicar, brought into the parish for that very purpose. In cases where only the remnant of a Protestant flock existed provision might be made for a curate without going to the expence of a rector. After explaining what he thought should be done, and asserting at some length the right of parliament to dispose of church property, he concluded by moving the following resolution:—

"Resolved, that the Protestant Episcopal Establishment in Ireland exceeds the spiritual wants of the Protestant population, and that it being the right of the State to regulate the distribution of church property in such a manner as parliament may determine, it is the opinion of this House that the temporal possessions of the Church of Ireland as now established ought to be reduced."

The facts and arguments contained in Mr. Ward's speech

pointed at a result far beyond that of the resolution which he moved. He showed that the maintenance of the Irish Church, in one way and another, cost the English government a sum far exceeding the amount of the revenues that belonged to that church, excessive as they were, and that consequently it would be far cheaper and every way better to pay the Irish bishops and clergy out of the English taxes than to continue the existing system. And yet so slowly does common sense and justice make its way, even under a reformed parliament, that some thirty-five years elapsed before Mr. Ward's resolution could get itself carried into effect; and it would probably have remained a dead letter for a longer period, had not a great statesman at length made up his mind to deal boldly and finally with the question raised in the first reformed parliament in 1834.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Grote, at the conclusion of whose speech Lord Althorp rose and requested the House to adjourn, in consequence of circumstances which had come to his knowledge since he entered it. He could not at present state the nature of those circumstances, but he trusted that the House would believe that he would not make such a proposition without being convinced of its propriety. The motion announced in such ominous terms was at once agreed to.

Lord Ebrington, who, as the reader will perhaps remember, had in similar emergencies come forward to assist the ministry, at once got up an address to Earl Grey, which was signed by a large number of supporters of the administration in the Lower House, and in which they entreated his lordship to retain his place at the head of the ministry, expressing their unaltered confidence in him. The premier, in his reply, declared that he intended to make every personal sacrifice that was required of him in support of the principles of the administration; but complained of the embarrassment and mischief that were produced by the reckless desire of innovation. In proceeding in a course of salutary improvement he found it indispensable that the government should be allowed to go on with deliberation and caution, and, above all, that they should not be urged by a constant and active pressure from without to adopt measures the necessity for which had not been fully proved, and which were not regulated by a careful attention to the settled institutions of the country both in Church and State.

When the House of Commons reassembled, it had transpired that the members of the cabinet who were opposed to an appropriation of the funds of the Irish Church to other than ecclesiastical purposes

had withdrawn from the ministry. They were—the Duke of Richmond, postmaster-general, the Earl of Ripon, privy seal; Mr. Stanley, colonial secretary; and Sir James Graham, first lord of the Admiralty. It was at first thought that their resignation would break up the administration, but the vacancies were filled by the Marquis of Conyngham, who became postmaster-general; the Earl of Carlisle, privy seal; Lord Auckland, first lord of the Admiralty; and Mr. Spring Rice, colonial secretary.

The issue of a commission to inquire into the whole subject had been recommended some time since by the lord-lieutenant of Ireland, and the cabinet now adopted the recommendation as a means of extricating themselves from the difficulties in which they found themselves placed. Lord Althorp, after announcing this decision, begged Mr. Ward to be satisfied with the concession, and to withdraw his motion until it could be ascertained whether any, and if so what, surplus was likely to be disposable for the purposes he had indicated. Mr. Ward, however, declined compliance, on the ground that everything portended a speedy change of ministry, in which case the commission might prove wholly ineffectual. Under these circumstances the government resorted to the usual means of getting rid of an inconvenient discussion—the previous question was moved, and, after some debate, carried by a majority of 120.

The haste with which the commission was expedited showed that it was caught at by the government as an expedient for extricating them from a difficult and embarrassing position; at the same time, it could not be denied that it was very desirable that the way should be prepared for legislation on the question by such accurate information as a commission would obtain. It could serve no good purpose to affirm an abstract principle before the government and the parliament were in possession of the materials which would enable them to embody it in wise and effective legislation. Even after the information was obtained, the question would still be surrounded with difficulties, because the revenues which one man might deem excessive might appear to another to be barely sufficient. Amidst the variety and contradiction of the statements made on the subject of the revenues of the Irish Church, it seemed necessary that their approximate amount at least should be ascertained before any farther steps were taken in the matter.

Nor was this the only Irish-church question that occupied the attention and endangered the stability of the ministry. Tithe bill after tithe bill had been passed, and all had failed most signally. The arrangement made under the last tithe bill would terminate on

the 1st of November in this year, and for the sake of the peace and tranquillity of Ireland, as well as to keep the clergy from starvation, it was necessary that ministers should again take up the question. A new tithe bill was introduced, the object of which was to convert the tithe, first into a rent-charge payable by the landlord, and ultimately into land; and it was proposed that the clergy should accept something short of the amount to which they were entitled by law in consideration of its being collected without difficulty, in the place of a larger sum which could only be obtained, if obtained at all, at the cost of riot and bloodshed. The bill, though introduced by Mr. Littleton, the Irish secretary, on the 20th of February, did not pass the House of Commons till the 5th of August. In the long interval between these two dates, it was altered to meet the objections of the Irish party, modified to meet practical objections that were urged against it from both sides of the House, considerably changed in consequence of the resignation of Mr. Stanley and his party, and assailed by him with a vehemence of vituperation seldom equalled in the House of Commons.

The Coercion Bill of the last session had worked so well, had produced so great a diminution of the number of predial and political outrages, that there could be no doubt whatever as to the policy and necessity of renewing it. But the government had to consider anxiously in what shape it should be renewed. No necessity had arisen for employing the court-martial clauses, and therefore it was thought useless to re-enact them. There was a division of opinion in the cabinet on the question of the continuance of the clauses which conferred on the lord-lieutenant the power of preventing the holding of public meetings intended to promote political agitation. The majority, strongly influenced by Earl Grey, were of opinion that the powers should be continued. A minority, however, thought that it would be expedient to conciliate the Irish party by leaving them out of the renewed act; but, in deference to the judgment of the head of the government and of the majority of their colleagues, they waived their objections, and agreed to support the clause in the House of Commons. Amongst those who belonged to this section of the cabinet was Lord Althorp, on whom, as leader of the House of Commons, the duty of defending the bill and conducting it through the Lower House devolved. Lord Wellesley, the lord-lieutenant of Ireland, a man of very inferior capacity, displayed great indecision in reference to these clauses. On the 18th of April he recommended their renewal; in June he wrote to Earl Grey proposing that they should be abandoned to facilitate the passage of the bill, through

the Lower House, and induce the Commons to grant the other powers which the bill conferred for a longer period. But being asked to give his opinion only with a view to the government of Ireland, on the 7th of July he concurred in the view taken by Earl Grey and the majority of the cabinet. Meanwhile, Mr. Littleton, who, as Irish secretary, had suggested the abandonment of the public-meeting clauses, expecting that the representation he had urged the lord-lieutenant to make would lead to such a settlement of the question as he recommended, after consulting Lord Althorp, who advised caution, but said he saw no great harm in his taking the step, communicated to O'Connell what he supposed to be the intention of the government with regard to the public-meeting clauses. O'Connell, whose tribute was diminished, and whose personal prestige was greatly damaged, by the operation of these clauses, had determined to offer a violent and factious opposition to the measure that contained them. He had accordingly made his preparations with his usual vigour and ability. He had summoned his followers to his assistance; he had determined on having a call of the House. A vacancy having occurred in the representation of Wexford, a ministerial candidate was in the field. O'Connell put forward a Repealer. He prepared an address to the reformers of England and Ireland, in which he appealed to them from the present ministry, and denounced the government, but more especially Lord Grey, in the most violent terms.

Matters were in this state when Mr. Littleton informed O'Connell in strict confidence, that the public-meeting clauses would not be renewed. He then found to his dismay that the cabinet had decided that those clauses should be retained. He lost no time in acquainting O'Connell with the disappointment of his expectations. O'Connell, naturally indignant, and supposing that he had been designedly duped, called on him to resign his office, and brought the matter before the House.

Mr. Littleton admitted that he had been guilty of gross indiscretion, but complained of the breach of confidence on Mr. O'Connell's part. O'Connell replied, "I never would have divulged the communication made to me, if I had not found that it had been used to gain an advantage over me by trickery. It was not I who sought the Irish secretary; I was sought by him. I had nothing to ask from him; he sent for me. He had no right to send for me to go to his office; I did not want him. If he wanted me, he knew where I lived. The election for Wexford was coming on. One of the candidates was a Whig: I thought it my duty to put up a

Repealer. In these circumstances the interview took place. I admit the conversation was confidential, but that confidence was limited. That secrecy would never have been broken by me, if I had not been tricked and deceived by the Irish secretary. . . ." A vehement altercation ensued, and, two days after, Mr. Littleton tendered his resignation; but it was refused, his colleagues declaring that they valued his services much too highly to dispense with them, and Lord Althorp especially stating that he would not remain in the government if Mr. Littleton left it. The Coercion Bill went through the House of Lords unaltered. In the House of Commons the revelations so maladroitly made by the Irish secretary placed the government in a very critical position. How could Lord Althorp, as leader, press on the House clauses to which it was now known that he was opposed? He therefore tendered his resignation, and persisted in it, in spite of the efforts made by the premier to induce him to change his determination. Thereupon Earl Grey, already anxious to be relieved from a position which had become painful to him, and only prevented from retiring by the importunities of his colleagues, determined to resign; and on July 9th he spoke for the last time in the House of Lords as premier. Never, perhaps, did any man occupy a higher position in the eyes of his peers and in those of his countrymen than Earl Grey filled at that moment. His life-long championship of the cause of reform, and the manner in which he had carried the Reform Bill through the legislature, had won for him the affectionate veneration of his own party. The firmness he had displayed in reference to Ireland, and especially his recent conduct on the coercion question, had to a great extent atoned in their eyes for his advocacy of the changes they had so strenuously but unsuccessfully resisted. All acknowledged his sterling worth, his earnest patriotism, his great abilities, his long and valuable services to the State.

It was generally expected that his retirement would draw after it the dissolution of the ministry. It was true that Lord Brougham had announced that he himself and several of his colleagues felt it a duty that they owed to their King and country in the present crisis of affairs to retain their offices; but Lord Althorp in the House of Commons announced that the administration was at an end. He was indeed even more impatient to retire than the aged premier. "Nature," he used to exclaim, "intended me to be a grazier, but men will insist on making me a statesman." However, the withdrawal of the premier facilitated the continuance in office of his colleagues. He alone in the cabinet seems to have held a

very decided opinion with regard to the clauses which had been the subject of the communication made to O'Connell by Mr. Littleton. The retention of those clauses had been supported by a majority of his colleagues rather out of deference to Earl Grey than from any belief in their necessity. Lord Althorp, therefore, by the advice and at the earnest request of the retiring prime minister, reluctantly consented to remain in office, and the other members of the government came to the same resolution. Lord Melbourne became first lord of the treasury and head of the cabinet, a few other official changes took place, and the Coercion Bill, shorn of the public meeting clauses, went forward with the assent of those who had hitherto so vehemently opposed it.

The appointment of Lord Melbourne to the chief place in the administration took most men by surprise. In ability and reputation he was far below his predecessor. He had never been a conspicuous politician. As a follower of Mr. Canning, he had abetted that statesman in his resistance of the very moderate instalment of reform which the Whigs at that time submitted to the House of Commons. He had indeed given a hesitating support to the Reform Bill, which he accepted as a necessary concession to the public opinion of the country rather than as a measure desirable in itself. To say that he was inferior as a speaker to Lord Grey is not to say enough. He was totally devoid of eloquence, and generally spoke with a hesitation and embarrassment which were painful to his hearers, and which only partially disappeared when he was animated by debate or excited by contradiction. What he said was plain and sensible, but had hardly sufficient merit to balance the defects of his delivery. He was a man of fashion, but had displayed in office a degree of ability and diligence of which his previous career and his known character had given no promise. Most men were astonished to find one so little known as a politician placed at the head of the government at this trying moment. The only explanation, as far as we know, that could be given of this appointment was, that his strong good sense, firmness of purpose, suavity of manner, and thorough goodness of heart recommended him to the king, to his colleagues, and to both parties, and enabled him to manage them better than many men of greater ability and more unbending character could have done.

The number by which the Coercion Bill passed through its last stage in the House of Commons sufficiently showed how thoroughly the members of that assembly were wearied of the discussion of Irish questions. Sixty voted in favour of the bill, and 25 against it.

There can be no doubt that the manner in which the government truckled to O'Connell had seriously weakened them, and paved the way for the speedy return to power of a party which the Reform Bill appeared to have annihilated. The popularity and prestige of the ministry was still farther damaged by their conduct with regard to the Irish Tithe Bill, into which they allowed O'Connell to introduce a very important change, compelling the landlords to take the tithe at once, instead of holding out to them the strong inducement of a discount of 40 per cent. if they did so. Mr. O'Connell's proposal was recommended by many considerations of expediency. It would give immediate relief to the tenant; it would prevent the discontent that would arise if one tenant paid a pound while another, with an exactly similar holding, only paid twelve shillings; but its chief attraction was that it would enable the House, wearied out by the protraction of the session, to get rid of the bill in two more sittings; for it was known that if this provision were adopted, O'Connell would at once withdraw from his opposition to the measure. Ministers were obliged to yield, against their own judgment, to the impatience of their supporters, but the concession made to a man who had been so distinctly denounced in the king's speech very seriously damaged them; while the great Radical party, much stronger in the country than in the House, bitterly complained that the measures which they hoped and expected to see follow the Reform Bill, were thrust aside to make way for long Irish debates.

One great work, however, was effected in this session to which parliament might point with a just pride. We have already referred to the agricultural distress that prevailed; to the miserable condition to which the agricultural labourer was reduced; to the riotings, machine-breakings, and rick-burnings to which their misery had instigated them. It was now becoming daily more evident that the root of all this misery and crime lay in the maladministration of the poor laws. The evil was an old one, but it was now rapidly approaching a climax. A sort of fatality seems to have attended all our legislation on this subject. Every measure that had been adopted had only served to introduce new mischiefs and to aggravate those it was intended to cure. The statute of Elizabeth, designed to make the indolent industrious, and to check vagrancy and mendicancy, and well adapted, under proper administration, to effect these objects, had in its actual working covered the land with able-bodied paupers and sturdy mendicants. The laws against bastardy had fostered unchastity. The 3 & 4 William

and Mary, and the 9 George I., which had been passed to put a stop to the extravagant dispensation of poor rates, produced increased extravagance, and frustrated every attempt at a more economical administration. The various laws of settlement devised to prevent large immigrations of paupers, had enabled wealthy parishes to thrust the maintenance of their superabundant labour on small and poor parishes. Thus, after three centuries of bungling and inefficient legislation on the subject, the work had to be begun again, and the government boldly grappled with the gigantic difficulty. Wisely determining to base their legislation, not on assertions and theories, but on a careful preliminary inquiry carried on by competent investigators, they appointed a commission composed of Dr. Blomfield, bishop of London, Dr. Sumner, bishop of Chester, and afterwards archbishop of Canterbury, Mr. Sturges Bourne, Mr. Nassau Senior, and three others. They were especially directed to investigate those exceptional cases in which a careful administration of the law had produced good results, as well as into those in which a careless and wasteful administration had brought forth its natural fruits. The inquiry was chiefly carried on by assistant commissioners, of whom Mr. Edwin Chadwick was the one whose recommendations were chiefly followed. Their inquiries revealed a multitude of abuses and stupidities in the administration of the poor laws far beyond what was previously known or suspected. Jobbery reigned supreme almost everywhere. Tradesmen exacted exorbitant prices from the parish, and bribed the parish officers to wink at their extortions. In many instances the rates were used to influence and corrupt the electors of parliamentary boroughs. The attempts which in some cases were made by the overseers to prevent imposition were generally overruled by the magistrates. The scale of relief given acted as an inducement to improvident marriages. In many instances it was found that the able-bodied paupers received higher allowances than the infirm and disabled. In the workhouse the pauper was overfed with beef and mutton, while the man who earned his food by the sweat of his brow could scarcely obtain bread; and received in relief a larger amount than the industrious and independent labourer was paid in wages. Relief once obtained, was regarded as a kind of vested interest, to be continued through life. Often pauper parents begot pauper children; and so on to the third and fourth generation. Relief was given in the most careless manner, and with gross partiality. In Buckinghamshire it was allowed to all who chose to ask for it. The recipients were often known to be

thieves or prostitutes. In many instances the allowance was extorted by violence and threats. Since the commencement of the machine-breakings and rick-burnings, the amount had greatly increased, the allowance being, in fact, a bribe given to the rioters in the hope, often vain, of propitiating them. It was insolently demanded for children whose fathers were receiving high wages, or wasting their earnings in drunkenness and disorderly living. In Sussex labourers refused to work; preferring to live on the parish allowance.

Such an administration of the poor laws was producing abundantly the harvest of ruin, degradation, and crime, that might naturally be expected from it. Whole parishes had been pauperised, parochial relief having been substituted in them for wages. Farmers discharged their labourers, that they might receive them again partly paid by the parish; and manufacturers in Durham adopted the same plan, thus throwing the burden of paying the wages of their workpeople on the shopkeepers and other ratepayers. This system was demoralising all classes of labourers, destroying veracity, industry, frugality, and all the domestic virtues, and fostering vice, profligacy, and drunkenness. It led men to dissipate their earnings, that they might entitle themselves to become recipients of parochial relief. Much of the money given in relief was at once spent in the beer or gin shop. Early and improvident marriages were contracted. Men went from the church to the overseer's office to ask for a loaf of bread or a bed to sleep on. Under the baneful influence of this system, the rates were steadily increasing, labourers were becoming paupers, farmers were reduced to the condition of labourers, capitals were being eaten up, and it was evident that, unless some remedy could be found, the end must be universal pauperism, degradation, and starvation. The existing law afforded no means of checking the progress of the mischief. Even in places where the relief was administered with the greatest care it was often found impossible to control the demand for it; and in some parishes a decrease in the population was attended by an increasing expenditure.

It must not be supposed that the labouring classes of England were thus sinking deeper and deeper without resistance. The great mass of them were still earnestly struggling to maintain their honest independence. To most of them the name of pauper, in spite of the advantages it carried with it, was a brand of shame and degradation. The independent labourer was still distinguished, if not by higher remuneration, at least by greater sobriety and

self-respect, by more decency in his clothing, more civility in his manners, by the greater cleanliness of his wife, his children, and his house. The man who worked early and returned from his work late for a pittance which the operation of the poor-laws was continually diminishing, could still proudly exclaim, "Thank God, I am not a pauper; thank God, neither I nor any of my family ever received parish relief." But poverty and misery compelled many to relinquish this boast, and drew them into the whirlpool of pauperism.

The changes which the commissioners resolved to propose were first suggested by Mr. Chadwick, who recommended the combination of workhouses, and a rigid administration and the substitution of contract management for the existing scenes of neglect, extravagance, jobbing, and fraud; the alteration, or even abolition of the law of settlement, by which a great part, or according to the latter suggestion, the whole of the enormous sums spent in litigation and removals might be saved, the labourers might be distributed according to the demand for labour, the immigration from Ireland of labourers of inferior habits be checked, and the oppression and cruelty to which the unmarried, and those who have acquired any property, were subjected, might, according to the extent of the alteration, be diminished, or utterly put an end to; the denial of relief to the able-bodied or to their families, except in return for adequate labour; and lastly, as essential to every one of these improvements, that the administration of the poor-laws should be intrusted, as to their general superintendence, to one central authority, with extensive powers: and as to their details, to paid officers, acting under the consciousness of constant superintendence and strict responsibility.

Such were the recommendations on which the new poor-law bill was based. Mr. Chadwick's ideas were as nearly carried out in this measure as their novelty and boldness would admit, with the addition of bastardy clauses, intended to check the unlimited increase of pauper population, which the old poor-law had so fatally encouraged. The best thing the parliament could do with it evidently was to examine it as carefully and pass it through as speedily as possible. This accordingly was what parliament did. Great complaints were made of one part of the bill, which, while stopping all outdoor relief, provided that the goods and furniture of the person admitted into a workhouse should be sold, not only in cases where the pauperism was likely to be permanent, but where there was reason to hope that it would only be transient, as when

it was caused by depression of trade, or other accidental circumstances; and it was indignantly asked, When a man is thus situated, will you make him sell his loom, or his tools, or his bed; so that when he comes out of the workhouse again he will be destitute, helpless, and without the means of carrying on his trade, or providing the most necessary articles for his family? But the answer given to this question was, that though no doubt there were instances in which an honest and industrious workman might, without any fault of his own, be reduced to such poverty, yet men were generally brought to this condition by improvident marriages, reckless expenditure, or neglect to make provision against a rainy day; and that it was necessary, in justice to the honest and hard-working ratepayer, that the property of the rate-receiver should be made available to the last penny before he was allowed to become a burden on the community; and that thus the working classes should be practically taught the latter but salutary lesson of reliance on their own industry, frugality, temperance, and providence, rather than on the public purse.

Another part of the scheme which caused great dissatisfaction, and gave rise to loud complaints, was that which required the separation of wives from their husbands, and children from their parents, while they were in the workhouse. Endless was the sentimental declamation that was poured forth on this subject by self-constituted defenders of the pauper. But nothing could be more reasonable than that the man who was obtaining his daily bread, not by the sweat of his brow, but by the labour of others, should be prevented from loading his supporters with fresh burdens, and producing a generation of paupers, to press with additional weight on the overburdened industry of the country. Besides, decency, propriety, and economy, all rendered these arrangements necessary, and had Mr. Chadwick's ideas been fully carried out, the classification would have been much more perfect. His motto was, "Aggregation in order to segregation," in other words, large unions, in order that every distinct class of paupers might come under a separate and appropriate management. But whatever might be the hardships of these separations, the pauper could at any time put an end to them, by ceasing to be a pauper and withdrawing from the workhouse, which he was always at liberty to do, by giving twenty-four hours' notice. The provision, however, to which so much objection was made, applied only to the able-bodied labourer, and not to the infirm and aged.

The transfer of the control hitherto exercised by magistrates to

elected guardians acting under the authority of a central body, was naturally opposed; as was also the removal of that great fetter on the freedom of labour—the law of settlement. A clause of the bill, rendering the child's parents and grandparents liable to support an illegitimate child was withdrawn; but it afforded Mr. Cobbett an opportunity of which he availed himself, of venting his spleen against the king's family and pensioners in general, by moving that the same principle should be applied to paupers on the pension-list; a proposition which was supported by the votes of sixteen members in addition to that of its proposer. Clauses were added excluding the members of the commission to be appointed to carry out the provisions of the bill from having seats in the House of Commons, and limiting its operation to five years; at the expiration of which period parliament would have an opportunity of revising its work in the light of the experience gained during the interval. An attempt, made by Sir S. Walley, to throw out the measure on the second reading, was defeated by 319 votes against 20; and it passed its last stage by a majority of 187 to 52.

When it reached the House of Lords the second reading was proposed in a speech of great ability by the lord chancellor. Lord Wynford opposed the motion; but the Duke of Wellington not only gave the measure his powerful assistance, but generously declared that it was *the best bill ever devised*; and as some of his party had complained of the lateness of the period of the session at which it was introduced into that House, he said that there was plenty of time during the present session to carry it regularly through all its stages. He warmly recommended that part of the bill which provided for a central board to control and give uniformity to the administration of the poor-law throughout the country. At the same time he referred to one or two provisions of the bill, which he hoped might be amended. The second reading was carried by a majority of 76 to 13.

Some changes of no great importance were made in the bill by the peers, which were all agreed to by the commons, with the single exception of a provision relating to the admission of dissenting ministers into the workhouses. Mr. Chadwick, the real author of the measure, was appointed secretary to the commissioners, and ably and diligently superintended its application. The bill did not receive the royal assent till the 14th of August, but no time was lost in bringing it into operation. This consequently took place at a period of the year when there is employment for all in the agricultural districts; and thus this great change was much

less felt than it would have been if made at a different season. The hopes of its authors were more than fulfilled, and the predictions of its opponents signally falsified. The introduction of the new act was speedily followed by diminished rates, higher wages, employment for all who sought it, a cessation of riots, rick-burnings, and machine-breakings, and a great improvement in the habits and character of the working classes. The Bashaws, as the commissioners were called by their more intemperate opponents, used the great discretionary powers confided to them with prudence and moderation. Most of the persons elected for guardians of the poor discharged the duties imposed on them by the act with zeal and fidelity. An abundant harvest mitigated the hardships inseparable from so great and sudden an alteration. A small remnant of inveterately demoralized paupers raised a loud outcry against the *bastilles*, as the new workhouses were termed by the opponents of the act, and they received encouragement from some who should have known better. But they gradually and slowly fell into the ranks of industrious labourers, or were obliged to submit to the terms which the law properly imposed on them as a condition of receiving the public money.

The session was, on the whole, damaging to the government. It was too reforming for the Tories, who besides could neither forget nor forgive their introduction of the Reform Bill, or their manner of carrying it through. It was too conservative for many of its own supporters, who blamed its deference to the House of Lords; were disappointed to find that the Reform Bill had not been followed up by the measures which had been held out to them as certain to result from it; and saw with great dissatisfaction the government steadily adhering to a policy of finality. The immense popularity they had enjoyed at the time of their accession to office and during the whole duration of the reform struggle, had given way to a feeling, not so much of hostility, as of indifference almost approaching contempt. The losses which the cabinet had sustained by the secession of many of its members had increased this indifference. The king and the Conservatives greatly mistook the mind of the country when they imagined that it was undergoing a Conservative reaction. Ever since he had been compelled to take back his Whig ministers, he had been impatient to seize the first favourable opportunity of getting rid of the advisers that had been forced on him by the will of the nation.

This resolution was no doubt strengthened by the disapproval with which he regarded the proposed appropriation of the revenues.

of the Irish church; and the coquettings of some of the ministers with O'Connell. He had already displayed these feelings in an unprecedented manner. On the 28th of May, the day observed as his birthday, and the day after the introduction of Mr. Ward's motion, just when Earl Grey was prevented from resigning by Lord Ebrington's address, the Irish bishops presented an address to him at the birthday levee, signed by 17 Irish prelates and some 1400 of the Irish clergy, in which they expressed their attachment to the doctrine and liturgy of the church to which they belonged, promised to assist in reforming real abuses, but deprecated undefined changes in the doctrine and discipline of the church, which persons widely differing among themselves were understood to have in contemplation. Instead of giving to this address a written answer prepared in concert with his advisers, the king replied in tones of great earnestness, the tears running down his cheeks, "I now remember you have a right to require of me to be resolute in defence of the church. I have been, by the circumstances of my life and by conviction, led to support toleration to the utmost extent of which it is justly capable, but toleration must not be suffered to go into licentiousness; it has its bounds, which it is my duty and which I am resolved to maintain. I am, from the deepest conviction, attached to the pure Protestant faith which this church, of which I am the temporal head, is the human means of diffusing and preserving in this land. I cannot forget what was the course of events that placed my family on the throne which I now fill. These events were consummated in a revolution which was rendered necessary, and was effected, not, as has sometimes been most erroneously stated, merely for the sake of the temporal liberties of the people, but for the preservation of their religion. It was for the defence of the religion of the country that the settlement of the crown was made which has placed me in the situation which I now fill; and that religion, and the church of England and Ireland, the prelates of which are now before me, it is my fixed purpose, resolution, and determination to maintain. The present bishops, I am quite satisfied (and I am rejoiced to hear from them, and from all, the same of the clergy in general under their government), have never been excelled at any period in the history of our church by any of their predecessors in learning, piety, or zeal in the discharge of their high duties. If there are any of the inferior arrangements in the discipline of the church—which, however, I greatly doubt—that require amendment, I have no distrust of the readiness and ability of the prelates now before me to correct such things; and to you I

trust, they will be left to correct, with your authority unimpaired and unshackled. I trust it will not be supposed that I am speaking to you a speech that I have got by heart; no, I am declaring to you my real and genuine sentiments. I have almost completed my sixty-ninth year, and though blessed by God with a very rare measure of health, not having known what sickness is for some years, yet I do not blind myself to the plain and evident truth, that increase of years must tell largely upon me when sickness shall come. I cannot therefore expect that I shall be very long in this world. It is under this impression that I tell you, that while I know that the law of the land considers it impossible that I should do wrong—that while I know that there is no earthly power that can call me to account—this only makes me the more deeply sensible of the responsibility under which I stand to that Almighty Being before whom we must all one day appear. When that day shall come, you will know whether I am sincere in the declaration which I now make of firm attachment to the church and resolution to maintain it. I have spoken more strongly than usual, because of unhappy circumstances that have forced themselves on the observation of all. The threats of those who are enemies of the church make it the more necessary for those who feel their duty to that church to speak out. The words which you hear from me are indeed spoken by my mouth, but flow from my heart.”

This speech was of course received with transports of joy by the prelates to whom it was addressed, and by the members of the united churches, to whom it was diligently distributed. The king's ministers must have felt that it was an open declaration of hostility against the policy to which they had committed themselves, and that he would dismiss them as soon as he thought that he could do it without subjecting himself to the humiliation of being obliged to ask them to take office again. The death of Earl Spencer raised Lord Althorp, his eldest son, to the Upper House, and afforded the king the opportunity he desired. When therefore, on the 14th of November, Lord Melbourne submitted to him the changes he proposed to make in the ministry in consequence of the vacancy of the chancellorship of the exchequer, his majesty told him that he was of opinion that the business of the country could not be carried on by such a ministry as it was now proposed to constitute and that he had made up his mind to call in the Duke of Wellington, who advised that the task of forming a new administration should be confided to Sir R. Peel, then at Rome and intending to pass the winter there. He was at once sent for, but as some time must

clapſe before he could return, the duke himſelf filled provisionally the offices of firſt lord of the treaſury and ſecretary of ſtate. Lord Lyndhuſt received the great ſeal on the 21ſt of November. On the 9th of December Sir Robert arrived in London, and at once accepted the taſk impoſed on him. He ſoon ſucceeded in forming a miniſtry, and, as it was evidently impoſſible for his government to ſtand its ground in the face of ſo large a majority as was arrayed againſt it in the Houſe of Commons, he appealed to the country on the 30th of December. He alſo publiſhed a manifeſto to the nation under the form of an addreſs to his Tamworth conſtituents, in which he thus indicated the ſpirit in which he was reſolved to act: "Our object will be, the maintenance of peace, the ſcrupulous and honourable fulfilment, without reference to their original policy, of all engagements with foreign powers, the ſupport of public credit, the enforcement of ſtrict economy, and the juſt and impartial conſideration of what is due to all intereſts—agricultural, manufacturing, and commercial."

Before the diſmiſſal of the Melbourn miniſtry, the two chambers in which the legiſlature aſſembled had been deſtroyed. The evening of the 16th of October was juſt cloſing in when flames burſt from ſeveral parts of the edifice, and ſpread ſo rapidly that ſome perſons who were inside had great difficulty in eſcaping. In a very ſhort time the two Houſes, with almoſt all the offices and buildings that belonged to them, were wrapped in one tremendous conflagration. Preſently every ſtreet leading towards the burning maſs was thronged as it had never been thronged before. Denſe crowds occupied the various open ſpaces from which the progress of the flames could be watched. A deep red glare overſpread the river, the Abbey, the hall of William Rufus, and the neighbouring houſes, preſenting a ſtriking contrast to the white moonlight which illuminated the ſtones of old Weſtmuſter-bridge, and the dark maſs of human beings that covered the pavement, the roadway, and even the parapets. The tide at this moment happened to be unuſually low, and this rendered the ſupply of water ſo ſcanty that at firſt only a few fire-engines, and theſe not very advantageouſly placed, could be brought to bear on the burning pile. It appeared to the ſpectators that no human efforts could ſave Weſtminſter-hall, and the Abbey itſelf was thought to be in imminent danger. The flames, crackling and ruſtling with prodigious noiſe, compared by thoſe who heard it to very loud firing of muſketry, ſpeedily devoured the two Houſes of Parliament, the interior of the tower containing the library of the Houſe of Commons, and moſt of the

residences and offices connected with the chief buildings. As the tide rose an ample supply of water was obtained from the river. By three o'clock the flames had sunk down, having destroyed nearly all the combustible matter within their reach. Westminster-hall was saved, and so too was the speaker's residence, but almost all the rest was burnt. Next morning, the citizens found Westminster-hall erect amidst a mass of blackened and unsightly ruins. Thus at last disappeared a building which Guy Fawkes had vainly attempted to destroy with gunpowder, and which Mr. Hume had been long labouring to remove by more constitutional means.

It was at first supposed that this destruction was the work of incendiaries, and it was asserted that persons had been seen running to and fro and setting fire to the buildings in several parts. But it was soon ascertained that it was the result of nothing more criminal than very gross carelessness. A workman had been employed to burn the old wooden tallies formerly used in the Court of Exchequer. He had been directed to burn them slowly and carefully; but being impatient to finish his work, in which he was engaged for more than ten hours, he disregarded this injunction. The consequence was, that the flues became intensely heated, and being in contact with a good deal of old dry timber, set it on fire; and this was the reason why the fire, which had no doubt been long smouldering, burst out in several places almost simultaneously.

This catastrophe was not much to be regretted. The buildings which had been destroyed were quite unsuitable for the accommodation of the legislature of the United Kingdom, and the necessity of erecting new Houses of Parliament had long been acknowledged. Fortunately, a large portion of the records, and that the most valuable, was saved.

CHAPTER VI.

CORPORATION REFORM.

WHEN Sir Robert Peel accepted office, he probably entertained no very sanguine hope of being able to sustain himself in it for any length of time. He knew how large a majority his opponents had in the House of Commons, and though he might hope to diminish that majority by an appeal to the country, he could hardly expect to change it into a minority. But he determined to do all he could to deserve victory, if he could not achieve it. With the view of strengthening his government, he made overtures to Mr. Stanley* and Sir J. Graham. They declined to join his administration, but promised that, as independent members of the House of Commons, they would give it a fair trial. The commencement of the elections was ominous for the new administration. The City of London, which had previously returned three reformers, now sent four. All the metropolitan boroughs elected radicals. But Bristol, Leeds, York, Newcastle, Exeter, Hull, Warrington, and Halifax, each sent to the House of Commons a supporter of the new ministry, to replace a supporter of their opponents. At Liverpool and Leeds the conservatives headed the poll. In the counties they gained largely. In Hampshire Lord Palmerston lost his election. In Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, Denbighshire, Derbyshire, South Devonshire, South Essex, West Gloucestershire, South Hampshire, South Lancashire, South Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, East Norfolk, South Northamptonshire, North Shropshire, East Suffolk, West Suffolk, East Surrey, West Surrey, South Warwickshire—and to this long list was added in the course of the year Devonshire, Inverness-shire, and Staffordshire—the Tories gained seats which had before been filled by Liberals; thus showing how strong a reaction had taken place among the agriculturists, and

* The late Lord Derby.

how rapidly and completely, thanks to Lord Chandos, the great territorial proprietors were recovering the influence they had formerly enjoyed. The ministerial party could boast that they had a majority of English members. In Scotland the relative strength of the two parties was little altered by the dissolution. In Ireland, where unscrupulous corruption on the one side wrestled with lawless intimidation on the other, the following, or, as it was then called, the *tail*, of O'Connell was somewhat diminished. On the whole, it was evident, that, though the appeal to the country had greatly swelled the Tory ranks, it still left to their opponents a decided majority, in the face of which it would be impossible for the new administration long to retain office. Sir Robert Peel was, however, none the less determined to strain every nerve and put forth every effort in order to place himself in a favourable position before the new House of Commons and the country. He laboured in the preparation of a number of measures which he intended at least to propose before being driven from office. He appointed an ecclesiastical commission, composed of the two archbishops, the Bishops of London, Lincoln, and Gloucester, and some of the chief members of the government, to consider the condition of the church in England and Wales, and to prepare a plan of church reform. He hoped that the measures which he was engaged in framing would contrast so favourably with those which had been brought forward by his predecessors, that they would strengthen the feeling in his favour.

The first business of the new House was, of course, the choice of a speaker. We have already seen how strongly the late ministers had in the previous parliament supported the election of Sir C. M. Sutton to that office. They now resolved to oppose his re-election, partly for the purpose of inflicting a defeat on the ministry, and partly because they believed that he had gone out of his way to assist in the formation of the conservative ministry, by taking part in some meetings of the privy council summoned by them. Mr. Abercromby, one of the members for the city of Edinburgh, was put forward by the Whig party. The interest excited was immense. Never before had so large a number of members been present. The division was closer than had been anticipated, Mr. Abercromby winning by only ten votes; the number being 316 in his favour, against 306 for the late speaker. It was remarked, however, that Sir C. M. Sutton had a majority of 23 English votes. Of the Scotch members, it was found that 31 supported their own countryman, while 18 voted for his opponent. Thus on the English and Scotch votes together Sir C. M. Sutton had a clear majority. But the Irish

votes decided the triumph of the Whig candidate, showing that the late ministers had come to an understanding with O'Connell, and had secured his co-operation.

The address in answer to the king's speech afforded the leaders of the Opposition an opportunity of inflicting a second defeat on the ministerial party. In the Upper House there was much debate, but no division. In the Lower House an amendment, strongly censuring the dissolution, was carried by 307 voices to 302. Here, again, the supporters of the government consoled themselves by remarking that a majority of 32 English members voted with them, and that the Opposition carried their point only through the support given them by O'Connell and his tail. O'Connell's adhesion to the Whigs was still more signally marked by an announcement he made, that he intended for the present to withdraw from the agitation of the repeal question, in the hope that the reform of the Irish corporations would put an end to the power of the Orange faction, and would give Ireland all she could hope to obtain by means of a domestic legislature.

Rumours were very rife that the government contemplated another appeal to the country, and the dread of such a step prevented many Opposition members from voting against them. Lord J. Russell therefore endeavoured to draw from Sir R. Peel a declaration of his intentions on this point. But his efforts were baffled by the wary premier. "With respect," he said, "to the question with which I was threatened by the noble lord on a former day, but from which I think that he has himself now receded, the question as to the dissolution of parliament, I cannot help thinking it possible that in the interval he has referred to a question put in the month of April, 1831, to Lord Grey. There were then rumours very prevalent as to the dissolution of parliament, and not without good cause. But the question to which I refer was put on the 21st of April, and on the 22nd parliament was dissolved. On the 21st of April, 1831, Lord Wharncliffe said, 'I wish to ask his majesty's ministers whether there is any truth in the statement that they have advised his majesty to dissolve parliament, and that it has been resolved to adopt that course.' Lord Grey, in reply, said, 'I believe the noble earl's question will be admitted to be one of a very unusual nature, and can hardly bring myself to believe, that, when he put it, he expected an answer. But whatever his expectations may have been, I have only to say, I must decline answering his question.' I am sure, that if the noble lord would on any subject submit to a rebuke from any one, he would not object to one coming from Earl Grey.

But I will be more explicit with him than Lord Grey was with Lord Wharncliffe. He has asked me whether or not I have countenanced rumours which he says are prevalent, respecting a dissolution of parliament. I tell him in reply, that by no act or expression of mine, directly or indirectly, have I sanctioned or countenanced such rumours. I will tell him with equal fairness, that I have never discussed with anybody the case hypothetically in which a dissolution might be considered necessary. I must at the same time say that it would be unbecoming in me, as a minister of the crown, to consent to place any prerogative of the crown in abeyance, or to pledge myself how I should advise the crown as to the course it should pursue." By this dexterous handling of the matter, Sir R. Peel kept the Opposition in doubt as to his real intentions, and left the Damocles sword of another dissolution still hanging over their heads.

The next contest in which the government was engaged was with some of its own supporters. On the 10th of March the following resolution was moved by the Marquis of Chandos: "That it is important that the present duties on malt should altogether cease and determine." Sir R. Peel, who had aided the Whig ministers in resisting the repeal of a portion of this tax in 1834, now strenuously withstood the attempts that were made to repeal it entirely. The motion was rejected by a majority of 138; 192 having voted for it, and 350 against it.

Another event happened at this time, which shook the tottering administration, and nearly brought it down. It was announced that the Marquis of Londonderry, who had on two occasions nearly fallen a sacrifice to the rage of the London mob, had been appointed to the important post of ambassador at St. Petersburg. He had many claims to this appointment, but he had also obtained for himself a most unenviable reputation by coming forward on all occasions as the defender of the most arbitrary and despotic acts of the absolute monarchs of the continent, and still more by having denounced the unhappy Poles as a nation of rebels, at a time when there was a strong and general sympathy with the sufferings of Poland. It seemed intolerable that a man should be chosen to represent England at the Russian court who would so entirely *misrepresent* the sentiments of the nation. It is very unlikely that a statesman so wary and calculating as Sir Robert Peel would willingly have consented to place him in a position in which he might have done great and irreparable mischief. He probably yielded to the influence of the Duke of Wellington. If he expected that the appointment would

pass unchallenged, he was speedily undeceived. Mr. Shiel moved "An address to his majesty for a copy of any appointment, made within the last four months, of an ambassador from the court of London to St. Petersburg, and of the salary and emoluments attached to such embassy." As the appointment had not been formally made, the motion was set aside; but the opinion of the House was significantly manifested in the discussion which took place on it. Even Lord Stanley, who, up to this had warmly supported the government, abandoned and censured them on this question. Lord Londonderry withdrew his claim to the office.

Sir Robert brought forward a dissenters' marriage bill, a tithe bill, and a bill for bringing into one the 400 ecclesiastical courts that then existed. All these measures exhibited the legislative dexterity of their author, but were dropped. On the 26th of February, Mr. Tooke moved an address to his majesty, beseeching him "to grant his royal charter of incorporation to the University of London as approved in the year 1831 by the law officers of the crown." Memorials against the proposed charter had been sent from the two Universities, and from the Colleges of Surgeons and Physicians, and the motion was opposed by the government, but was carried by 246 votes to 136.

Notwithstanding these and other defeats, Sir R. Peel announced that it was his intention to retain office until a vote should be passed by the House of Commons which distinctly implied that an administration possessed of more public confidence and greater ability to discharge its public duties could be formed. He challenged Lord J. Russell to bring forward a direct vote of want of confidence; a challenge which his lordship declined, declaring that he would wait for the measures of reform which the government had promised to bring forward.

It was by no means an easy matter for the Opposition to agree on any point on which they could combine against their astute opponent, and inflict on him such a defeat as would compel him to retire. The bills which he brought forward were, to a great extent, reproductions of measures which the Whigs had introduced, with certain manifest improvements suggested by the discussion which the measures had undergone in the previous session. Gentlemen who had voted in favour of these bills before could hardly vote against them now. Such was, to a great extent, the case with regard to the Irish Tithe-commutation Bill which Sir R. Peel introduced, and which the leaders of the Opposition reproached him with having borrowed almost entirely from them. They therefore

resolved to join issue with the government on the question of the appropriation of the surplus revenues of the Irish Church to non-ecclesiastical purposes; a question which, as we have already seen, they had previously staved off by the appointment of a commission, but which they now brought forward as a means of driving Sir R. Peel from his post. Accordingly Lord J. Russell, as leader of the Opposition, on the 30th of March moved the following resolution :—

“That this House resolve itself into a committee of the whole House, in order to consider the present state of the Church establishment in Ireland, with the view of applying any surplus of the revenues not required for the spiritual care of its members to the general education of all classes of the people, without distinction of religious persuasion.”

On a division the votes were :—

For the resolution	322
Against	289
<hr/>	
Majority in favour of the resolution	33

This division took place at three o'clock on the morning of the 3rd of April, at the close of a debate which had lasted for three nights. Sir R. Peel proposed that the resolution should be considered in committee on the Monday following; but the victorious majority would not tolerate even this delay, and the debate was at once renewed. We will not weary the reader with a description of the parliamentary fencing, by means of which the ministers tried to keep their offices and the leaders of the Opposition to force them to resign; it is enough to say that, after a long series of resolutions and discussions, the majority succeeded in fastening on the government the task of carrying into effect the resolution they had so strenuously opposed, and thus compelled Sir Robert to execute the threat of resignation with which he had concluded his speech on the original motion. On the 8th of April Sir Robert and his colleagues, by a unanimous determination, resigned their offices.

Such was the end of this attempt to force a conservative ministry on the country. The results were, the needless turmoil of a hotly contested election; a vast expenditure of money; much time, which should have been devoted to public business, wasted in party strife; an increase of the conservative opposition, and a proportionate weakening of the Melbourne administration, causing it to seek strength and stability in a closer alliance with O'Connell and

his followers. And now the question arises, Who was really responsible for these mischievous results? On the principle that the king can do no wrong, the blame of them must be thrown first on the Duke of Wellington, who consented to fill Lord Melbourne's place provisionally, and next on Sir R. Peel, who accepted it definitively, and accepted with it the responsibility of Lord Melbourne's dismissal, as he himself honourably and frankly acknowledged. But history must not be arrested in its decisions by constitutional fictions. It judges sovereigns as well as their ministers, and in this instance it must condemn William IV as having made an unwarrantable use of his prerogative, in order to place in power the party that he personally preferred. Had Lord Melbourne stated that he was unable to carry on the government, the king might, without any impropriety, have accepted his resignation. But Lord Melbourne did nothing of the kind. He had a large majority in the House of Commons, and was quite prepared to go on, when the king so unexpectedly dismissed him and his colleagues. This act was consummated before any adviser that the king might have recourse to in accordance with the forms of the constitution could have been consulted. It was an act done by the king on his own judgment, or on the advice of persons to whom he ought not to have listened in such a matter. It was only after the ministry had been actually dismissed that the Duke of Wellington was sent for. He ought to have recommended the king, under the circumstances of the case, to recall Lord Melbourne; and by not doing so he took on himself, probably without reflection, the responsibility of the dismissal. But this was advice that he can hardly be blamed for not having given. His strong Tory principles, his hatred of the Reform Bill, by no means diminished by his experience of its actual working, prevented him from perceiving the nature and consequences of the step the king had taken. And even if he had disapproved that step, his chivalrous nature would have led him at all hazards to spare the king the humiliation of asking his discarded ministers to return to the posts from which they had been ejected. The conduct of the king and the duke together placed Sir R. Peel in an inextricably false position. We can hardly doubt, that if he had been consulted beforehand, his sound judgment and practical experience would have led him to recommend the king to wait for more certain proofs of the asserted reaction than he yet possessed. But when he returned from Rome, the time for giving such advice was past. After the government had been kept open for him so long, and in so unprecedented a manner, he could hardly have refused to accept it.

All that remained for him to do was, to make an appeal to the people, in the desperate hope, that by the exertions and influence of the Tory party, he might obtain a majority in the new parliament. That such a hope was not altogether quixotic the result of the elections proved. But the displacement of the ministry, and the dissolution of parliament which that step drew after it, were grievous blunders; and, though the Duke of Wellington and Sir R. Peel must share between them the constitutional responsibility, the verdict of posterity will attach the real blame to William IV. As for Sir R. Peel, he deserved praise not only on account of the great diligence and ability he displayed in framing and conducting his measures, but for the upright and honourable manner in which he acted under the extremely difficult and undesired circumstances in which he was placed.

On receiving the resignation of the ministry, the king sent for Earl Grey, and by his advice again entrusted to Lord Melbourne the formation of a cabinet; thus at last undergoing the mortification from which the duke and Sir Robert had striven to save him. The new ministry was, with one very important exception, nearly a reproduction of that which had been so unceremoniously dismissed a few months before. Lord Brougham's name did not appear in the list, the Great Seal being put in commission.

Parliament, having been adjourned, as usual in such cases, to allow the ministerial arrangements to be completed, reassembled on the 18th of April, and then adjourned again till the 12th of May, to allow time for the re-election of the new ministers, and for other arrangements, which the change of administration had rendered necessary. The seats vacated were not in every case filled to the satisfaction of the new government. Lord J. Russell was defeated in South Devonshire by a Conservative opponent, and was obliged to take refuge in the small borough of Stroud. Mr. Littleton, who had been made Lord Hatherton, and Mr. C. Grant, who had become Lord Glenelg, were succeeded in the seats they vacated by Conservatives. Lord Palmerston was provided with a seat for Tiverton. Lord Morpeth's seat for Yorkshire was contested, but he triumphed by a great majority.

The new ministry, considering the impossibility of carrying through many measures at the period of the session which had now been reached, determined to content themselves with endeavouring to pass a bill for the reform of the municipal corporations. In the Middle Ages, the members of the corporations had been elected by the freemen of each town. But the Tudor sovereigns had infringed

on this ancient liberty; and under the Stuarts the charters had been remodelled in such a manner as to transfer to the crown the power of appointing the municipalities. The charters granted by William III. and his successors were in the same form. Under such charters, abuses of every kind had grown up, and municipal corruption equalled and even surpassed parliamentary corruption. When, therefore, Earl Grey's ministry had dealt so successfully with parliamentary reform, it was naturally expected that they would carry through an equally effective measure of corporation reform. The Whigs had accordingly responded to this expectation. In 1833 they appointed a commission to inquire into the state of the municipal corporations in England, and the ministry hoped that by dealing with this question in a vigorous and comprehensive manner, their party might recover much of that popularity which it had enjoyed during the struggle for parliamentary reform. The commissioners appointed to carry out the inquiry do not seem to have been very happily chosen; it was alleged that, with the exception of Sir F. Palgrave, who dissented from and protested against the report made by his colleagues, they were utterly unknown; and they certainly did not afterwards emerge from the obscurity with which they were reproached. It was also complained that their report added very little to the information on the subject already possessed by parliament and the country. It was, however, notorious that the various officers of the municipal corporations were elected by persons who had very little interest in the expenditure of the corporation funds; who were very accessible to all kinds of corrupt influences; and that the gross abuses existed which might be expected to arise and flourish under such circumstances. It was therefore argued that a bill might have been prepared without this previous investigation; and it must be admitted that the measure brought forward by the government was not so much based on the particular facts which the commissioners had elicited in the course of their inquiries as on general considerations; and that it applied everywhere the one remedy of popular control to all the various abuses which had flourished under a practically irresponsible municipal government.

The bill dealt with 183 boroughs containing a population of about two millions. It gave the franchise in these towns to persons residing within seven miles of the place who should have been rated to the relief of the poor for three years, and who should have regularly paid their rates for that term, care being taken

not to exclude persons from the right of voting who had previously acquired it for a longer period than that of their inability to pay up their rates. These persons were to elect a common council, varying in number from fifteen in the smallest places containing about two thousand inhabitants, to ninety in the largest towns. Twenty of the largest having more than 25,000 inhabitants were to be divided into wards. The common council was to be elected for three years, but one third of its members were to go out of office every year, the mayor to be elected annually by the council, and be a justice of the peace for the borough and likewise for the county. The whole work of watching the town was to be placed under the control of the council, which was also to have the power of granting ale-house licences. Such were the principal provisions of this important measure. It contained other clauses relating to the retention or withdrawal of certain privileges in corporate towns, and the payment of compensations, the appointment of magistrates, the arrangement of quarter sessions, the appointment of recorders, stipendiary magistrates, and town clerks.

The bill was read a second time without a division, and was in committee from the 22nd of June to the 20th of July—a period which, consideration being had of the boldness and importance of the measure and the power of those whose interests it assailed, cannot be regarded as excessive. This was partly due to the fact that the Conservative party had acquired experience of the uselessness of such a waste of time as had been made in the Reform struggle; but also in no slight degree to the candour and good sense of Sir R. Peel, who by his example and influence discouraged all needless opposition to a measure demanded by public opinion and by the state of the municipal corporations.

The point on which the Conservative party in and out of doors made its chief stand was embodied in an amendment, moved by Sir W. Follett, reserving the rights of the freemen.

The freedom of a borough, carrying with it the parliamentary and municipal franchise, might be acquired by birth, apprenticeship, redemption, *i.e.* purchase, marriage, or by the gratuitous gift of the corporation in each borough. The presentation of the freedom was a compliment often paid to successful military or naval commanders, or other persons of distinction to whom the corporators of the borough desired to testify their admiration and respect. In some boroughs the freemen enjoyed valuable rights of pasturage or a share in commons adjacent to the town, and of the proceeds of their sale if they should be sold; in others, they possessed the right of selling

their wares and merchandise toll-free in any fair or market in the kingdom; in others, again, they participated in the monopoly of trading in the town possessed by the general body of its freemen.

In ancient times the freemen, as their name sufficiently indicates, constituted a sort of privileged caste in each borough; they were the élite of its inhabitants, and the fitting electors of the corporate body by which it was governed. But this had long since been the case. In almost every borough, the governing class, taking advantage of the power they possessed of admitting whom they chose into the number of the freemen, had selected their own partisans, and thus the freemen had gradually come to be, as a class, though no doubt, with many honourable exceptions, thoroughly corrupt and degraded, and by long habit had been led to expect a fixed and often very valuable consideration for every exercise of their parliamentary or municipal franchises. The majority of them were bound to the Tories both by interest and gratitude; for the Tories generally paid them most liberally for their votes, and had preserved to them the parliamentary franchise which the Whigs had attempted to take from them.

It was pointed out by Sir W. Follett that the clause, as it stood, would prevent persons, who otherwise would have become freemen, from enjoying that privilege; and would thus shut them out from obtaining not only the municipal but also the parliamentary franchise, which Earl Grey's government had reluctantly allowed the freemen to retain; a concession they had great reason to regret, because these freemen proved to be, as had been anticipated and foretold, the most corrupt and purchasable portion of the constituencies. But the motives that led the government to desire the gradual extinction of this class of voters led the Conservatives to contend vehemently for its retention, and to complain loudly that ministers were attempting in a covert and underhand way to introduce a most important change in the Reform Bill. It was warmly contended, that if these persons were to be deprived of the privilege they had inherited, and which the Reform Bill had continued to them, it should at least be done by a special act of parliament, and not be slipped in as an indirect consequence of municipal reform. On the other hand, it was argued by the government and their supporters that these freemen would be open to every species of corruption; that they were not necessarily residents or ratepayers, that they might come from gaol for the purpose of giving a vote; and if for these reasons they were debarred from exercising the municipal

franchise, how could they be allowed to retain the parliamentary franchise? Sir W. Follett's amendment, as well as another intended to preserve the franchises and other privileges of those who either by birth or apprenticeship had acquired inchoate rights, was rejected. Thus, so far as the power of the House of Commons extended, the franchises of these freemen, with all the corruptions, monopolies, and other abuses with which they were connected, were doomed to final extinction. We must not here omit to notice one most valuable though indirect effect of this bill. By putting an end to the rights of apprenticeship and exclusive trading, it struck off one fetter on industry, as the poor-law, in dealing with settlements, had struck off another. Both of them by preventing men from trading or working where they would, interfered most mischievously with the freedom of labour.

The bill provided no qualification for common councillors beyond that of being ratepayers in the borough for which they were elected. It was proposed by Sir R. Peel, on the 30th of June, that in the larger boroughs they should be required to possess personal property of the value of 1000*l.*, or that they should be rated on a rental of not less than 40*l.* a year; and that in the smaller boroughs they should possess a property of 500*l.* or a rated rental of 20*l.* a year. It was urged that this would be a practical carrying out of the intentions of the old charters, which directed that "fit, discreet, and respectable" persons should be appointed to corporate offices. Sir Robert in support of his motion referred to the fact that a clause similar to that which he proposed had been inserted in the acts of parliament which had been obtained for the government and regulation of Manchester, Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Bilston, Bolton, Oldham, Stoke-on-Trent—all of which towns were regarded as representatives of popular opinion. This proposal was also rejected. A like fate befell an attempt made by Lord Stanley to render the periods of election less frequent, by providing that one-third of the council should go out of office every two years instead of every year. Mr Grote was unsuccessful in an attempt he made to introduce the ballot into municipal elections. Proposals for rendering town clerks irremovable, and for preventing municipal corporations from granting leases, were also rejected. The bill, therefore, unchanged in all its leading features, went up to the Lords, where a decided majority were strongly hostile to it, but anxious to avoid a collision with the Commons. Their lordships began by deciding that they would hear counsel against the statements contained in the report of the commissioners;

and the government, unable to resist the will of the majority, agreed that all the corporations which had petitioned for a hearing should be represented by two barristers. In accordance with the terms of this understanding, Sir C. Wetherell and Mr. Knight were heard at the bar of the House. The bill, after being amended by the Lords, was brought down again to the House of Commons. It was ultimately agreed that one-fourth of the councillors should be aldermen holding office for six years, half of their number being re-elected every three years. A qualification was admitted, though not precisely that which the Lords had adopted. A difficulty which had been raised respecting the ecclesiastical patronage of corporations was got over by determining that the livings in their gift should be sold. The clause conferring on town councils the power of licensing public-houses was abandoned. Thus this great measure, second only in importance to the Reform Bill, of which it was the natural sequel, became the law of the land.

As ministers had regained office by means of the resolution they had carried incorporating the principle of appropriation with the Irish Tithe Bill of their predecessors, they were, of course, compelled to carry forward that measure with the amendments they had introduced into it. Accordingly, on the 26th of June, Lord Morpeth, as secretary for Ireland, brought in a bill which was nearly a reproduction of the measure of the displaced government, with an appropriation clause annexed to it.

Sir R. Peel proposed to separate that part of the bill which related to tithe from that which related to the appropriation of the surplus, making them into two separate and distinct bills. This proposal was supported by Lord Stanley and Sir J. Graham. They endeavoured to prove that if all the requirements of the Irish Church were met—if a sufficient number of clergymen were to be maintained, and sufficient stipends provided for them—if churches were to be built where needed, and the existing churches kept in proper repair, all the available funds of the Irish Church would be employed, and instead of a surplus there would be a deficiency. On the ministerial side the conclusions were very faintly denied; but it was argued that the great grievance of Ireland—a grievance which, for the sake of the Irish Church herself, it was desirable to abate—was, that revenues intended for the religious instruction of the Irish people should be monopolised by 800,000 Protestants, for purposes of which the 7,000,000 Catholics of Ireland strongly disapproved. It was therefore contended that the two questions of the collection and the appropriation of Irish tithe were intimately connected, and

ought not to be separated On a division Sir R. Peel's motion was lost: the numbers being—

For the motion	...	...	...	...	282
Against	..	..	...	...	319
Majority for the government					37

This majority was not large enough to warrant the expectation that ministers would be able to carry the measure through the House of Lords, where an overwhelming majority was avowedly hostile to the principle of appropriation. The Conservatives offered no farther opposition to its progress, knowing well how it would be dealt with in another place. The lords made some important alterations in the provisions relating to the collection of tithes, and rejected the appropriation clauses. Lord Melbourne warned them, that if they persisted in thus dealing with the bill, it would be abandoned by the government, and the clergy, unable to collect their tithes, would be reduced to beggary, but also that the government would be compelled by law to take proceedings against them in the Exchequer Court of Ireland to recover from them 650,000*l.*, which had been advanced from the public funds. Nevertheless, the Conservative majority persisted in the course they had decided to adopt, and the bill was withdrawn. The government then brought in a bill, which passed both Houses without opposition, releasing them from the necessity of prosecuting the Irish clergy.

During the session of 1836 the affairs of Ireland continued to occupy a large share of the attention of the legislature. This arose from the still unsettled state of that country, which no government could disregard; and the position occupied by the Irish Catholic party, which, though not very numerous, was large enough to hold the balance between the government and the opposition, and to give the majority to the one or the other, as it suited the purpose of its leader. O'Connell used the power which this state of things placed in his hands very skilfully. He gave a steady support to the government; but he took good care to make them feel that the continuance of that support depended on their adoption of such a policy towards Ireland as he advocated, and would be instantly withdrawn, or even converted into bitter hostility, if they should swerve from it.

The consequence of this state of things was shewn in the introduction of an Irish Corporation Reform Bill, framed in accordance with a pledge given in the king's speech, and supported by O'Con-

nell and his followers. The opposition exclaimed loudly against the measure, contending that it would intensify those evils of party ascendancy with which Ireland was already afflicted, by transferring to the Catholics the predominance which had hitherto been enjoyed by the Protestants. They proposed to obviate this danger, and to secure that the new corporations should contain some Protestant ingredients, by enacting that almost all the officers of the existing corporations, from the mayors and aldermen down to the butter and cheese tasters, should hold their respective offices till removed from them by death or in other ways, which they promised to specify in new clauses of the bill. They also proposed, that in some large towns the corporations should continue to exist while in others they were to be altogether suppressed, leaving certain members who were to take charge of charitable trusts. In those towns whose corporations they proposed to suppress, they suggested that the functions belonging to those bodies should be exercised by commissioners to be appointed by the lord-lieutenant.

These proposals are sufficient to show that the cry of "justice for Ireland" was neither unreasonable nor unfounded; for had they been adopted they would have placed Ireland on a very different footing from England and Scotland in respect to her municipal affairs. The government wisely and rightly set its face against these suggestions, and the bill went through the lower House unaltered in its leading features. But when it got into the House of Lords, the majority of that assembly did what the minority of the lower House had vainly wished to do. Never perhaps was any measure so extensively changed in its passage through that House. Out of 110 clauses which the bill contained, 106 were virtually or actually thrown out of it, while eighteen fresh clauses were introduced. The government could not accept a measure thus mutilated, after the pledge they had given. When it came back into the Lower House, Lord J. Russell moved that Dublin, Belfast, Cork, Galway, Kilkenny, Limerick, Waterford, Clonmel, Drogheda, Londonderry, Sligo, and Carrickfergus should have corporations selected in the manner provided by the bill; that twenty-two other boroughs should not have corporations, but elect commissioners to whom the corporate property and the right of appointing the various municipal officers shall belong; that other boroughs, still less considerable than these, should be allowed to choose commissioners or not as they might think fit; that the appointment of magistrates should be transferred from corporations to the crown. This com-

promise, proposed by the government and adopted by a large majority of the Commons, was rejected by the Lords, and the bill was consequently dropped.

The same fate awaited the Irish Tithe Bill, reproduced this session in a somewhat modified form. It was once more very fully discussed in the House of Commons, the Conservatives again ineffectually attempting to get rid of the appropriation clauses; the House of Lords, on the other hand, getting rid of them by large majorities; whereupon Lord J. Russell raised a question of privilege, maintaining that some of the amendments introduced by the peers were invasions of the constitutional principle, in virtue of which the Commons claimed the exclusive right of dealing with all clauses granting money to the crown. He also condemned these amendments on their own merits, and moved that they should be taken into consideration that day three months—in other words, that the bill should be abandoned. After some discussion this motion was carried by a majority of twenty-nine.

In England the question of tithe commutation was not clogged with any such difficulties as the introduction of the appropriation clauses had imported into the Irish measure. It was alike the interest of the government and the opposition, of the tithe-payer and the tithe-receiver, that the question should be speedily and finally settled. In consequence of this general agreement no difficulty was to be apprehended in either House of Parliament. Ministers therefore adopted, with some modifications, the plan that Sir R. Peel had introduced during his brief term of office. The bill passed through both Houses with little alteration. Only one amendment made by the Lords was objected to when the bill came back to the Commons, and the Lords did not insist on it. Thus a great scandal, a great grievance, a great clog on the operations of the agriculturist, a great source of unpopularity to the clergy, and a great social evil was at length quietly taken out of the way.

During this session the question of the marriages of dissenters, which had been brought forward in two preceding sessions, was taken up as part of a greater whole, and dealt with in a more comprehensive manner than had hitherto been attempted. Up to this period the only register of births, deaths, and marriages was that kept in the churches. Of births there was no official registration at all, but only of baptisms; and this of course was very imperfect, as it did not contain the names of the children of persons of the Baptist persuasion, or of members of the Society of Friends,

or of persons who for some reason or other had not been baptised in their infancy. All marriages were performed and registered in the churches. This was also the case to a great extent with regard to burials, but not entirely, as a few cemeteries existed as well as a few noneconformist burial-grounds, in which, though registers were usually kept, they were often kept very carelessly. It was therefore desirable that some general and uniform system of registration should be established, and that copies of all registers should be collected in a central place, where they could be referred to, if required, to establish claims to property, or for other purposes. Thus the question of dissenters' marriages was merged in the larger question of a general registration. This was dealt with in two bills; one for the registration of births and deaths, and the other for the registration of marriages. These measures, with the working of which we are all familiar, effected a very great and desirable change with very little interference with existing practices. Baptisms, marriages, and funerals continued to be celebrated in the churches after the passing of the bill exactly as they had been before. And the dissenters obtained the boon of celebrating their marriages in the manner most in accordance with their religious convictions. But these are by no means the only benefits which have resulted from this measure. It has imposed on the registrar-general and his subordinates throughout the kingdom the duty, which has been admirably discharged, of collecting an immense body of statistical facts of the greatest possible value to the government, the legislator, the medical man, the philosopher, the man of science, and the nation at large; exercising a most beneficial influence on the march of scientific discovery, on the sanitary legislation of parliament, and on the sanitary proceedings of our municipal corporations, enabling them to discover and remove the causes of disease, to watch its course, and to study the efficiency of the various means that may be employed to contend with it. It was a fortunate circumstance for the country, in reference not only to this, but to many other measures brought forward about this time, that the opposition in the two Houses was led by two men so candid and straightforward as the Duke of Wellington and Sir R. Peel. It was due in a great degree to their influence, that these two important bills were read a second time in both Houses without opposition, and that government had no reason to complain in any respect of the treatment they received in committee in either House of Parliament. A few alterations of no great moment were made in the details of the measures. The old practices of proclaiming the banns in the

churches, which the bill, as at first drawn, had abolished, was retained. It was ordered, for the sake of procuring greater publicity, that notices of intended marriages should be read at the meetings of the guardians of the poor. This provision was strongly opposed by the representatives of the dissenting interest in the House of Commons; but a large majority, listening to the advice of Lord J. Russell, decided to accept it rather than run the risk of losing the bill.

The Ecclesiastical Commission, which had been called into existence by Sir R. Peel, continued its labours, the places which had originally been occupied by members of the late administration being now filled by their successors. This alteration, however, did not at first produce any great change in the character of its recommendations. It was in fact doing quite as much in the way of church reform as could be expected from a body containing so large a proportion of bishops. The commissioners set themselves to work with exemplary diligence to remedy many of the more glaring abuses of the church. They proposed to equalize the incomes of the different bishoprics, and so to remove the chief inducement to translations from one see to another. Some of these inequalities were enormous. Thus, while the Bishop of Durham had a revenue of 19,480*l.* per annum, the Archbishop of Canterbury 18,090*l.*, the Bishop of London 13,890*l.*, the Bishop of Rochester had only 1,400*l.*, the Bishop of Oxford 1,600*l.*, and the Bishop of Llandaff 1,170*l.* It is true that many of the more poorly endowed bishops held deaneries, canonries, or other rich preferments, *in commendam*, as it was termed; but this was another abuse, and another source of unpopularity to the church. It was proposed therefore to fix the income of Canterbury at 15,000*l.*, of York and London at 10,000*l.* each, of Durham at 8,000*l.*, Winchester at 7,000*l.*, and to fix the other sees at 5,000*l.* or 4,500*l.* per annum; to suppress the bishoprics of Bristol and Sodor and Man, to establish new sees at Ripon and Manchester; and to adopt such new circumscriptions of dioceses as the change in the population and the alterations of circumstances rendered desirable.

Coming down to cathedral dignities, it was proposed to deal with their incomes on the same principles as had been applied to the incomes of bishops—not bringing them to an exact equality, but establishing a much nearer approach to equality among them than had hitherto existed. There was to be a great reduction in the number of canons and minor canons. Many ecclesiastical sinecures connected with the cathedrals were to be suppressed.

These arrangements placed a large revenue at the disposal of the commissioners; and it was proposed that it should be applied to the augmentation of poor livings in populous places and public patronage, thus diminishing the glaring disproportion which existed in many instances between the duties of the ministers of the church and their emoluments. There were many parishes of the metropolis and of Lancashire and Yorkshire, with populations of twenty or thirty thousand, under the nominal charge of one minister receiving a precarious income, often less than 150*l.* per annum, arising from fees and pew rents; there were many country livings, with very small populations, in which the salary of the minister amounted to 3,000*l.*, 4,000*l.*, and even 7,000*l.* per annum. Anything like a complete redress of these inequalities was rendered impossible by the existence of lay patronage, recognized by the law as a private and salable property; for any transfer of the revenues of these livings to others would diminish the value of the patron's property, and any augmentation of them would enable him to sell the advowson or next presentation for a larger sum than he could otherwise have obtained. For these reasons, the commissioners limited their operations to benefices in public patronage; and this was fortunately the case with regard to the great majority of parishes situated in those parts of the kingdom in which the population had been and still was growing most rapidly.

Such were the chief recommendations of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. The government determined to embody them in bills, and introduce them into parliament. They encountered, however, a very vigorous opposition from the radical and dissenting sections of the ministerial party, who objected strongly to the amount of salaries still proposed to be left to the bishops and other dignitaries, and desired to apply the principle of appropriation, which had already been sanctioned by the House of Commons in dealing with the Irish Church, to her English sister, or, at all events, to see the church-rate question settled before a measure calculated to strengthen the church was adopted. But the government, aided by the Conservatives, and having secured the neutrality of Mr. O'Connell and his followers, carried the Bishops Bill; but the Chapter Reform Bill and that for the regulation of pluralities were dropped for this session. Bills were also passed to prevent the creation of new vested interests in certain cathedral offices which it was intended to abolish; for the suppression of the secular jurisdiction of the Bishop of Durham and the Archbishop of York; and for restricting the renewal of leases by ecclesiastical persons. This delay

afforded those persons whose interests or prejudices were touched by the proposed measures—and they were numerous—as well as all who for any reasons objected to them, an opportunity of agitating the country against them. Many of the bishops declared strongly against the proposed chapter reforms. The deans and chapters themselves petitioned against them, and so did a great number of the clergy; the dissenters likewise agitated against them. But more formidable than all their other antagonists was Sidney Smith, canon of St. Paul's, London, who, in his three celebrated letters to Archdeacon Singleton, exerted his unrivalled powers of wit, argument, and raillery against the proposed measures. But all was in vain. The ministry was too deeply committed on the question to draw back, and the recommendations of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners were too manifestly right and reasonable to be withstood, even by the wit, eloquence, and wisdom of the great canon; but as long as the English language endures, the memory of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners will be handed down in the humorous and argumentative letters of their witty antagonist.

Defects in the Corporation Reform Act which had caused the validity of the election of several mayors and other municipal officers to be disputed were remedied.

A most barbarous and absurd practice of the English courts was abolished. Up to this time prisoners accused of felony were not allowed to have counsel to defend them. The prosecution might be carried on by the ablest advocates at the bar, while the defendant, often a poor unlettered man, was compelled to plead his own cause. This practice, like every other established abuse, did not want its apologists.

The cause of humanity gained another victory during this session. Hitherto the law had required that persons convicted of murder should be executed the next day but one after their conviction, unless that day should happen to be a Sunday, in which case they would be executed on the Monday. In the interval between the sentence and its execution they were to be fed on bread and water, and no person was to have access to them except the gaoler, the chaplain, and the surgeon. The statutes containing these provisions were repealed, and a longer interval allowed to elapse between the sentence and its execution.

The proposal to admit ladies to hear the debates in the House of Commons was carried this year by 132 against 90, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, while avowing his own strong objection to their admission, proposed in deference to the decision of the House,

that the sum of £400 should be applied to defray the cost of fitting up a portion of the gallery for their accommodation. After a long debate, in which members of the government took different sides, the Speaker was requested to deliver his opinion, and declared that he had come to a distinct and positive conviction that the measure was most undesirable; and though the motion for the admission of ladies to the gallery of the House had been carried by a majority of 42, the proposal to furnish the sum necessary for carrying it out was refused by 42 against 28.

The representatives of the agricultural interest came year after year before the House with statements, only too well founded, of agricultural distress, and with various ineffectual applications for relief. This year the government determined to anticipate them, and at the very commencement of the session, on the 8th of February, Lord J. Russell proposed the appointment of a select committee to deliberate on this question. The committee sat till the 21st of July, when its chairman announced that his colleagues had come to the conclusion that they would not make any report, but content themselves with publishing the evidence they had taken. Without waiting for this result of the committee's labours, but no doubt with a full foreknowledge that they would be fruitless, "farmers' friend" Lord Chandos brought forward a motion of his own on agricultural distress, urging that in any reduction of taxation that might be made, the interests of agriculture should be considered. This motion was resisted, not only by Lord J. Russell, but also by Sir James Graham and Sir R. Peel, but notwithstanding the opposition of the leaders of the two great parties in the House, supported by very conclusive reasons, there were 178 votes in favour of the motion to 208 against it.

The great feature of the budget of this year, and that which excited the warmest enthusiasm, and called forth the greatest alarm and the most vehement opposition, was the proposed reduction of the stamp duty on newspapers from 4*d*, minus the discount, to 1*d*., without any discount. An attempt was made to get rid of this part of the government plan by Sir C. Knightley, who proposed that the duty on soap should be reduced instead of the duty on newspapers.

After a long and earnest debate cheap newspapers triumphed over cheap soap by a majority of 33; there being 241 in favour of the former, and 208 for the latter.

Other changes were made in connection with this of the stamp duty. Newspapers exceeding 1530 square inches of the printed part of the sheet were to pay an additional halfpenny. If the

sheet exceeded 2295 square inches or had a supplement, an additional penny was to be paid. Every newspaper was to have a distinctive stamped die. Two proprietors of each newspaper were to be registered with its editor and its publisher; and, by a clause subsequently carried, every proprietor was to be registered. This last provision was struck out by the Lords, who made no other change in the bill; but this amendment was rejected by the Commons as being a breach of their privileges. They, however, passed another bill similar in all respects to that which had been thus dealt with, except that it did not contain the clause of which the Peers disapproved, and it went through both Houses without opposition. The results of this important change were very different from those which its opponents had foretold. Since it was effected newspapers have become much cheaper, and their tone and character, instead of being lowered, has been greatly elevated, and in every respect improved.

Meanwhile, Canadian discontent pushed to the very verge of insurrection; needless and improper intermeddling in the internal affairs of Spain by a legion composed of British subjects under the command of Colonel Evans; and other attempts to force on "liberal principles" by interference in the affairs of continental nations, were creating alarm and uncertainty at home, and rendering necessary an addition of 5000 men to our naval force, and a corresponding increase of our naval estimates.

In the session of 1837, opened by commission on the 31st of January, Irish questions again occupied a large portion of the attention of parliament. In the first place, the Irish Corporation Reform Bill was re-introduced with some modifications. The bill having passed its third reading in the House of Commons by a majority of 55, was read a first and second time in the Lords without opposition; but when, on the 5th of May, the order of the day for its committal was read, the Duke of Wellington moved that it should be deferred to the 9th of June, in order that their lordships might see what course ministers would take with regard to the Tithe Bill, intimating at the same time that, if the church question should be dealt with in a manner calculated to meet the views of the majority of that House, they would be prepared to make great concessions on the question of corporation reform. Lord Melbourne, Lord Brougham, and other supporters of the ministry, objected strongly to the adoption of the duke's motion, and urged the House to proceed at once with the consideration of the bill; but the motion was carried by a majority of 77. The Tithe Bill had, however, only reached its

second reading in the House of Commons on the very night fixed for the committal of the Municipal Bill in the House of Lords; but the Peers were now, of course, well aware of its character, which was not calculated to abate the objections they entertained to a measure which would transfer the management of the greater part of the municipalities of Ireland from the Protestants to the Catholics. Lord Lyndhurst therefore proposed a further postponement of the committal of the Irish Corporation Bill, which was carried by a majority of 86.

The measure for which the Lords thus resolved to wait was the fifth legislative attempt to settle the Irish Church question which had been made in the course of the last three years. It was introduced into the House of Commons on the 1st of May, and read a second time on the 6th. The old appropriation clauses no longer figured in it, but the plan of appropriation was revived in another shape. It provided that all future bishops, dignitaries, or other beneficed clergymen, should be required to pay a tax of ten per cent. on their incomes, to be devoted to the purpose of general education in Ireland. In justification of this provision, a statute of the 15th of the 28th of Henry VIII. was cited to the following effect: "That every incumbent in each parish in Ireland shall keep, or cause to be kept, within his parish a school to learn English; and that every archbishop, bishop, etc., at the time of the induction of any clergyman to his benefice, shall give to the person so inducted a corporal oath that, being so admitted or inducted, he shall do his best endeavour himself to teach the English tongue to all that are under his rule and governance." The same act imposed penalties on all bishops and clergymen who should be guilty of a breach of this statute: for the first offence the clergyman was to be fined, for the second he was to be fined more severely, and for the third to be deprived. It was further stated, that the act was still in force, and that every rector or vicar on being inducted into his benefice was compelled to take the following oath: "I will teach or cause to be taught an English school within the said rectory or vicarage, as the law in that case requires." This bill was read a second time on the 9th of June, in spite of the opposition of Mr. Sherman Crawford and a few others, who declared that they would be satisfied with nothing short of a complete release from all taxation in support of the Irish church. Irish poor-laws and Irish education also occupied a large share of the attention of the legislature; but the discussion of them led to no result during this session.

The electors of Westminster had for some time past been dissatisfied with the state of their representation. Colonel Evans, one of their members, had during the last two years been in Spain, commanding the British legion there ; and on all the great divisions on party questions which for some time past had taken place in the House of Commons, Sir F. Burdett, the other member, had been absent. His neglect was for some time excused on the plea of advanced years and failing health ; but it began to be rumoured that a great change had taken place in his political sentiments ; that his heart was with the conservatives, and that, if he felt himself free to follow the bent of his own inclinations, his vote would be with them too. A meeting of the electors of Westminster was held on the 24th of April, at which resolutions were passed expressive of dissatisfaction with the conduct of their representatives, and calling on them to resign their seats. In anticipation of their compliance, Sir G. Murray was brought forward by the Conservatives, and Mr. Leader by the radicals. Sir Francis accepted the Chiltern Hundreds, announcing at the same time that he would again present himself as a candidate for the suffrages of the electors. He declared that he should come forward as the supporter of the laws and institutions of the country, and as a " resolute opponent of all the new-fangled notions, shallow doctrines, and crude projects now afloat." He denied that he had changed his opinions, but charged those who accused him of inconsistency with having abandoned theirs. He called on the electors of Westminster to join him in struggling against " an unnatural alliance, and odious and ludicrous combination of Irish agitators, popish priests, and paid patriots, operating on a well-intentioned but weak and vacillating administration."

It was a curious spectacle to see the old ultra-radical, now become an ultra-Tory, present himself once more to the electors of Westminster, in the hope that, partly by the votes of those who had so often supported him before, and did not like now to cast him off, partly by the suffrages of old opponents and reactionary liberals, he might once more carry his election. Sir G. Murray withdrew from the contest, leaving Sir Francis and Mr. Leader to fight out the battle. But though Sir Francis had abandoned old friends and old principles, the Westminster electors were faithful to the man by whom they had been represented for 30 years. The baronet was returned by a majority of 515 votes.

This result was hailed with great exultation by the conservatives, and severely mortified the ministerial party. That Westminster, which had so often upheld the liberal party in the days

of its adversity, which had been faithful to Fox when Fox's political creed was most unpopular, should now return as one of its members a man who had distinctly avowed his attachment to the Tory party, was a heavy and unexpected blow. Sir Francis himself openly took his seat on the opposition side of the House, and spoke against the government measures amidst the uproarious cheers of his new friends.

But a yet heavier blow was in store for the liberal party. The chief English measure of the session was a bill which the government had introduced for the settlement of the question of Church Rates. The scheme was explained to the House of Commons on the 9th of March by Mr. Spring Rice. It was computed that a sum of 225,000*l.* might be gained annually by the introduction of a better system of leasing and managing church lands, with which intent the bill proposed to invest them in eleven commissioners. From the saving thus effected, eked out by pew-rents, the repairs of all churches were to be made. This was, in fact, a plan similar to that already adopted in Ireland for the purpose of getting rid of the grievance of church cess, and had been found to work well there.

On the 12th of March fifteen bishops, being the whole of those who were at that time in town, met at Lambeth Palace, and unanimously resolved to oppose a measure which proposed to take from them the management of their episcopal estates; and on the evening of the same day the Archbishop of Canterbury took the opportunity of the presentation of petitions against the abolition of church rates, to express in strong and decided terms his objection to the government plan. To this declaration Lord Melbourne, evidently much mortified, replied with unusual asperity and vehemence, and was answered by the Bishop of London, who denounced the scheme as a "sacrilegious spoliation," loudly complaining that a plan considered and rejected by the Ecclesiastical Commission, on which many members of the government sat, should be brought forward by the government.

These appeals were addressed to the country, and were followed by a strong agitation against the bill. While numerous petitions in favour of it were got up by the dissenters, petitions still more numerous, though less numerously signed, were got up against it by the clergy and their flocks. The old cry of "the church is in danger," was raised again with something of the old effect. Every possible influence was brought to bear on members of the House of Commons in order to defeat the bill.

When the resolutions on which it was to be founded were

brought before the House on the 22nd of May, a division took place, and the second reading was carried by a majority of five. The smallness of this majority made it evident that the bill would have no chance of getting through the House of Commons, and the measure was abandoned by the government; but, in order to pave the way for future legislation on the question, Lord J. Russell moved that a committee should be appointed "to inquire into the present mode of holding and leasing the property belonging to bishops and chapters, with a view to ascertaining the probable amount of any increased value that might be obtained by an improved management, with a due consideration of the interests of the established church and of the present lessees of such property.

This motion gave rise to several divisions which threw light on the state of parties in regard to the church-rate question. A motion by Mr. Harvey for the entire and uncompensated abolition of church rates was rejected by a majority of 431. The motion for inquiry was carried by a majority of 86. An attempt made by Mr. Goulburn to pledge the House to appropriate any surplus revenues that might be obtained through the means indicated by Lord J. Russell's motion to the extension of religious instruction by ministers of the establishment, was defeated by a majority of 26. These numbers show that the conservative reaction evidently going on was due in a great measure to the exertions of the clergy, who were now recovering the influence and popularity they had lost by their opposition to the national will during the reform struggle, and through those gross abuses which were now being gradually corrected. The clergy disliked the measures of the ministers, distrusted their professions of attachment to the church, and, with very few exceptions, exerted all the influence they possessed against the government. On the other hand, the conduct of ministers themselves tended to promote a conservative reaction. Instead of keeping alive the enthusiasm of their supporters by bringing forward the ballot and other measures which the popular voice called for, they regarded themselves as having already achieved all the great changes which could safely be made, as having now entered the promised land flowing with milk and honey, and as being entitled to sit down and govern a grateful people in a kind of political millennium. But there was yet another cause of the conservative reaction, which was probably more potent than either the influence of the church or the improgressive character of the administration; and that was, the circumstance that three succes-

sive good harvests had spread plenty through the land, rendering the mass of the people indifferent to those party politics which had so deeply stirred them when distress and poverty overshadowed the country.

This session was remarkable for the unusually large number of abortive motions. Some of those we have already had occasion to mention. Others, proposed by the radical party, in favour of great and organic changes in the constitution, failed through the opposition offered to them by the government. Among these were Mr. Grote's motion for the ballot, Sir W. Molesworth's for the abolition of the property qualification, Mr. Lushington's for the exclusion of the bishops from the House of Lords, Mr. Duncombe's levelled against the system of proxies in the Upper House; an attempt made by ministers to graft on a motion made by Mr. Williams for the repeal of the duty of one pound payable on the admission of freemen into corporations, an amendment deferring the time of the payment of rates under the Reform Bill from April to October, Mr. Tennyson d'Eyncourt's motion for shortening the duration of parliaments, and a motion for the abolition of the law of primogeniture. Of these motions, some were rejected; others postponed for want of sufficient time.

So great a change as that which had been made by the new poor-law could not be effected without producing much incidental hardship, and causing a good deal of discontent. Although from the very beginning the good results of the new law manifestly preponderated over the hardships it produced in individual cases, yet the evil effects of the change were felt at once, while the greatest part of the good was produced by the slow and gradual operation of the measure in improving the habits and feelings of the working classes, and in substituting reliance on their own industry and economy for reliance on the public purse. Nevertheless, the framers and advocates of the new poor-law could point with triumph to the results it had already achieved. The amount of the rates and the number of able-bodied paupers had been enormously diminished. The vicious practice of supplementing wages by payments out of the rates had almost entirely ceased, and the wages of the labourer had increased. But some of those who found themselves compelled to exchange luxurious idleness for hard work were greatly dissatisfied. Others, more deserving of compassion, whom a temporary depression of their trade had compelled to take refuge in the workhouse, and to sell off their little property, complained that the diet provided for them in the work-house was

insufficient, and inferior to that which was supplied to criminals in the gaols. The vicious and turbulent elements which the old system had produced were in a state of exasperation that might easily be fanned into insurrection. Their distress and irritation had been increased by the sufferings of an unusually long and severe winter. Under these circumstances the poor-law commissioners were strongly urged to relax, in some degree, the stringency of their regulations, and to allow some return to the old system of out-door relief.

The flame of discontent was fanned by the powerful influence of the *Times* newspaper, which fiercely attacked the new poor-law board. A meeting on the subject was held in the West Riding of Yorkshire, and was said to have been attended by from 250,000 to 300,000 persons. On this subject the ultra-Tories were found in coalition with the extreme radicals. Every effort was exerted to hinder and deter the commissioners from extending the operation of the law to the manufacturing districts, into which as yet it had only very partially penetrated. It was stated by the Earl of Harewood, the lord-lieutenant of Yorkshire, that in some places the commissioners had gone into towns for the purpose of assisting in introducing the law, and had been obliged to leave them in consequence of the resistance which was offered. But this feeling of hostility to the new law was confined to places where it had not yet been introduced; in those places where it had been fully tried, as Lord Brougham justly remarked, the measure was not an odious but a favourite law with the well-disposed labouring men. However, a committee of the House of Commons was appointed to inquire into the operation of this law. Mr. Walter and Mr. Harvey were placed on it, but soon found that the course its inquiries were taking was not calculated to promote their views. The former of these gentlemen moved, unsuccessfully, the addition to the committee of six members whose opinions on the subject were in accordance with his own. The latter took the far more extraordinary course of publishing in the *Sun* newspaper the evidence as it was daily taken. Ultimately both retired from the committee, complaining that it was partial and one-sided; that the poor-law commissioners were allowed to produce whatever evidence they pleased, while the poor were practically debarred from putting before it any evidence at all. These statements were strongly rebutted, and the committee continued its labours, the results of which were embodied in a report presented to the House of Commons a short time before the end of the session. This document

stated that the introduction of the new law had been attended with a considerable improvement in the character and condition of the poor; that labourers and widows, with large families under age for work, suffered severely from the loss of the allowances they had before been accustomed to receive, but that their sufferings had been much mitigated by a considerate administration of the law; that its operation was satisfactory and ought to be maintained, and that its administration both by boards of guardians and poor-law commissioners had been, in the main, judicious; lastly, they recommended that the inquiry should be resumed next session, and suggested certain points to which they thought it advisable that the attention of a future committee should be directed. The favourable opinion of the law expressed by the committee was corroborated and confirmed by a great number of important facts contained in the report of the commissioners for this year.

A very important question came before the House during the session. Messrs. Hansard presented a petition, in which they stated that they were authorised, by certain resolutions of the House, to sell all parliamentary reports and papers to the public at a rate below the actual prime cost. In accordance with this permission, they had printed a report of the commissioners for inquiry into the state of the prisoners, in which it was alleged that many of the prisoners were found reading certain obscene works which had been published by J. J. Stockdale. This firm commenced an action against Messrs. Hansard for libel in the Court of King's Bench, laying their damages at 20,000*l*. It was pleaded in justification, that the report had been printed under the order of the House of Commons. Lord Chief Justice Denman gave it as his opinion, that the authority of the House of Commons would not justify the publication of a libel; and the jury accordingly rejected the plea. The question was taken up by Lord J. Russell on the 13th of February, and on the 16th of the same month he moved for a committee, on the report of which a resolution was founded, declaring the power of the House to order the publication of such papers as it shall think conducive to the public interests, and affirming that any action for the purpose of bringing the privilege of parliament into discussion before any tribunal elsewhere than in parliament, is a high breach of privilege; and farther, that for any court or tribunal to assume to decide on matters of privilege inconsistently with the determination of either House of Parliament thereon, is contrary to the law of parliament, and a breach and contempt of its privileges. These resolutions, being in accordance with the general opinion of

the House, and supported by the votes of Sir R. Peel, and many of the most distinguished members of his party, were carried in spite of the strenuous opposition of Sir R. Inglis. It was remarked at the time, that the statesmen were in favour of the resolutions, and the lawyers against them.

The weakness of the government was visibly increasing. Bill after bill had been brought forward by them, carried on to a certain stage, and then either dropped or defeated. Under these circumstances, and with continually dwindling majorities in the Commons, there was little chance of their being able to force forward their measures against the hostile phalanx arrayed against them in the House of Lords. To restore the balance by a large creation of new peers was out of the question. The only resource left was to dissolve. But it was very doubtful whether much would be gained by another appeal to the country: while it was almost certain that the king would refuse to sanction it. Sir R. Peel had publicly declared in the House of Commons that he was prepared to resume office. The government therefore found themselves unable to carry the measures to which they were pledged, and which they could not allow to be thrown aside without incurring much discredit and seriously damaging their party. It is not easy to see how they could have extricated themselves out of these difficulties; but an event occurred which saved the ministry for a time, and exercised a very considerable influence on the political destinies of the country.

William IV. was now in his seventy-second year. His health, before his accession was feeble, but the duties which then devolved on him had evidently produced a beneficial effect on his constitution. However, in the spring of this year his old bad symptoms had recurred; and it was perhaps the expectation of his death that had led the government to acquiesce in the frustration of their measures. About the beginning of June, he had an attack of hay fever, a complaint to which he had been annually subject before his accession. On the 15th of June the *Times* announced that his death was certain and imminent; but the disease unexpectedly took a more favourable turn, and a bulletin issued on the 16th announced that his condition was so far improved that three of his physicians had returned to London. However, on Sunday, the 18th, the symptoms again became urgent, and on Tuesday morning the tolling of muffled bells announced to the Londoners the decease of their king. The short reign of William IV. was marked by greater and more beneficial changes than had been effected during any

previous reign. The political improvements carried out in the course of it have already been dwelt on; but there were other kinds of progress effected which were the indications and the causes of still greater progress in material prosperity. At the commencement of this reign there were in the British dominions 315 steam-vessels, with a tonnage of 33,441; before its close, there were 600 steam-vessels, with a tonnage 67,969; and there were steam-ships in construction of far greater size and power than had ever been built before, intended to try the experiment, of which many high authorities confidently predicted the entire failure, of crossing the Atlantic. At the commencement of this reign there was not a single railway of any importance open for goods and passenger traffic in the whole of England; before its close, railways were either completed, or in the course of construction, connecting the metropolis with Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester, the chief towns of the iron pottery districts, Winchester, Southampton, Bath, and Bristol, and besides a considerable number of provincial railways serving important towns and traversing wealthy districts.

The character of William IV., in its excellencies as well as its defects, is best described by the epithet which was so generally applied to him during his lifetime—"the Sailor King." At an early age he was sent by his father, George III., to rough it on board ship as an ordinary midshipman. He saw a good deal of service, and acquired that plain downright bluntness of manner and that frank honesty of purpose by which the naval officers of his time were generally distinguished. He was affable, kind, good-natured, but very undignified in gait and conversation; he had a propensity for gossiping which led him thoughtlessly to reveal important state secrets. It should always be remembered to his honour, that his good sense and popular conduct at the commencement of his reign probably saved England from the revolution which would almost infallibly have occurred if his elder brother George IV., or his younger brother the Duke of Cumberland, had occupied the throne at that critical period.

CHAPTER VII.

VICTORIA REGINA.

WE now enter on the history of a reign the events of which are equal in importance to those of any that has preceded it, and which has as good a title as any to be denominated the Augustan period of English literature; a reign which has been illustrated not only by the events which it is the more especial business of the historian to record, but also by the poetical genius of Tennyson and Browning; by the historical and literary works of Carlyle, Macaulay, and Buckle; by the ingenious and thought-suggestive speculations of Darwin and the author of the *Vestiges of Creation*; by the scientific researches of Faraday, Owen, Adams, Huxley, Whcatstone, and Cooke; by the geographical and geological investigations of Buckland, Murchison, and Lyall; by the wit, humour, and pathos of Bulwer Lytton, Dickens, and Thackeray; by the invention of the electric and magnetic telegraphs; by works of unsurpassed excellence in philosophy, sculpture, painting, architecture, and music; as well as by rapid intellectual, social, moral, and religious progress.

William IV. died at two o'clock in the morning of the 20th of June. The Archbishop of Canterbury and the Lord Chamberlain immediately left Windsor for Kensington, where the young queen was roused from her sleep to receive the tidings of her uncle's death. The same evening the privy council assembled at Kensington Palace to give directions for her proclamation, and to perform the other formalities usual at the commencement of a new reign. The connection between the two kingdoms of England and Hanover, which had subsisted since the accession of George I., was now severed by the succession of a female sovereign to the throne of Great Britain; and the English people witnessed without a sigh

the dissolution of a connection the cost and peril of which greatly outbalanced its advantages. The first signature attached to the act of allegiance presented to the queen was that of her eldest surviving uncle, Ernest Duke of Cumberland and King of Hanover.

The accession of a new sovereign of course rendered necessary a dissolution of parliament; and in the general election that ensued, great advantage was taken of the supposed partiality of the queen for her present advisers by the ministerial candidates. The electors were conjured to support the friends of the young and popular sovereign, and not to force on her at the very commencement of her reign a government that would be unacceptable to her. These appeals were not without their effect. But the proportion of the two parties in the House of Commons was not seriously altered by the general election. The conservatives carried many English counties and some boroughs, which had previously returned Whigs or radicals. But these English conservative gains were counterbalanced by Irish and Scotch conservative losses; and the only party which decidedly profited by the election was the party that followed the lead of Mr. O'Connell. The new parliament met on the 30th of November, and was opened by the queen in person.

The address in reply to the speech was moved by her uncle, the Duke of Sussex, seconded by Lord Portman, supported by the Duke of Wellington, and unanimously adopted in the Upper House. In the House of Commons three amendments, embodying the principles of the radical party, were moved by Mr. Wakley. After long discussion, the first was rejected by a majority of 509 to 20, and the others were not pressed to a division. Amendments moved by Mr. Harvey, having for their object to bring the hereditary revenues of the crown more directly under the control of parliament, and to procure a revision of the pension list, were also rejected.

Mr. Harvey, however, returned to the charge on the question of the pension-list; and eventually the government took it out of his hands, by bringing forward a motion for the appointment of a committee of inquiry into the subject, couched in Mr. Harvey's own words, but with the following proviso attached to them: "due regard being had to the rights of parties." Mr. Harvey himself was excluded from it, because he refused to promise that he would abstain from publishing a report of the proceedings, as he had already done when sitting on the poor-law committee.

The remainder of this preliminary session was taken up with the settlement of the amount of the civil-list, of the allowance that should be made to the Duchess of Kent, the queen's mother, and

with other pecuniary arrangements rendered necessary by the demise of the crown. The government had intended to have adjourned parliament to the 1st of February as soon as the arrangements were completed; but they were compelled to change their plans by the arrival of news from Canada of so serious a nature as to require prompt consideration. It was therefore decided that parliament should reassemble on the 16th of January.

The intelligence that had caused this change of plan was very alarming. The discontent that had long been smouldering in that colony had at length burst forth into open revolt. In Lower Canada, the military, under the command of Sir John Colborne, had succeeded in suppressing the insurrection without much difficulty, but serious apprehensions were entertained that it would be followed by another outbreak, aided by a formidable body of marauders from the United States. In the upper province the administration had at this critical moment been intrusted to Major Head, who had been almost dragged from his bed while acting as assistant poor-law commissioner, that he might be sent to govern this great colony, at one of the most important crises of its history. This modern Cincinnatus acted more like a hero of romance than a sober statesman. Knowing that a revolt was impending, his first care was to send every soldier out of the province. He allowed the rebels to make their preparations without the slightest hindrance. When at length they advanced, he summoned the militia and the loyal inhabitants to his aid. The call was obeyed with enthusiastic unanimity; and the insurrection completely suppressed. This spirited way of dealing with the rebellion was highly applauded by many, both at home and in the colony; but, in the opinion of the colonial secretary, the success which had attended it did not atone for the imprudence of which he considered the governor had been guilty in sending away the troops on the eve of a revolt, which might very probably have been supported by a large force of United States sympathisers, in which case the result would perhaps have been very calamitous. Farther differences of opinion between Major Head and the home authorities caused him to send in his resignation, which was accepted, much to the regret of the colonists. His services were acknowledged by his being raised to a baronetcy; and he was succeeded in the government of Upper Canada by Colonel Arthur, whose administration of the province was more in harmony with the views and traditions of the Colonial Office.

When parliament reassembled, the attention of its members was directed to Canadian affairs. It was announced that the ministers had

resolved to send out the Earl of Durham as governor-general of Canada, with extraordinary and dictatorial powers, to remodel its constitution. This announcement was, on the whole, well received. He was a man of a really noble nature, modest, earnest, and courageous, but impetuous and irascible. His political opinions were strongly liberal, and he was looked to by the radical party as the prime minister of a future administration, which it was hoped would undertake the settlement of those organic changes—such as secret voting, the shortening of the duration of parliaments, and the extension of the suffrage—which they advocated as the necessary and logical supplements of the Reform Bill. The approval of the appointment was, however, by no means confined to the party to which the earl belonged. It was felt that this great crisis of imperial interest was not a time for the indulgence of the spirit of party; and the conservatives themselves acknowledged that the known liberality of Lord Durham's views was calculated to propitiate the more moderate portion of the discontented Canadians. He was known, too, to be a man of firmness, who would resolutely establish and maintain order, while endeavouring to apply the remedies which, after due deliberation and careful examination, he found to be needed. Another circumstance that increased the sympathy felt for him was the announcement that he did not intend to accept any recompense for his services. Thus Lord Durham carried with him the hopes and earnest good wishes of all reasonable men. Unfortunately these good dispositions did not last long; the spirit of party, which for a moment had slept, revived, and proved too strong for the spirit of patriotism. On his arrival in Canada, Lord Durham felt that he must begin his work by establishing order, as the absolutely indispensable condition of the maintenance of liberty. But he seems to have been disappointed at finding that the great and dictatorial powers which he had been led to believe that he would enjoy, had been considerably diminished before the bill intended to confer them passed through parliament, and to have chafed under the restraints thus imposed on him. The act prescribed that he should be advised by a council, and that every ordinance he issued should be countersigned by at least five of its members. There was a council of twenty already in existence, nominated by his predecessor Sir J. Colborne, and selected with tolerable impartiality from the representatives of the various parties and nationalities that existed in Canada. This council he replaced by one composed of his secretaries, two of his military

secretaries, and the commissary-general, all unacquainted with Canada, and all likely to consent to any measure the governor-general might submit to them. This first error was followed by a second still more serious. He found a large number of prisoners confined for offences committed during the late rebellion. A portion of them were induced to plead guilty, and Lord Durham issued an ordinance by which he transported some of these to Bermuda, and decreed that if they returned to the province of Canada they should be deemed guilty of treason and put to death. This ordinance was duly countersigned by his five councillors. It was illegal, and Lord Durham stated that when he drew it up he was aware of its illegality, but that he trusted to the government and the parliament to shield him from the consequences of a stretch of power which he deemed necessary to the preservation of the integrity of the empire. But the state of feeling in parliament had greatly changed, since his departure, with regard to his mission. Everything connected with it, the character of his secretaries, the expenses he had incurred, the constitution of his council, had been subject to searching and unfriendly criticisms. In the House of Lords the ministry were in a position that might be compared to that of a water-logged wreck into which enemies from all sides are pouring their broadsides. They were subject to the constant attacks of two men who were beyond all comparison the ablest debaters in the Upper House—Lord Brougham and Lord Lyndhurst. The former of these noble lords had a special quarrel with Lord Durham, which had broken out into bitter recriminations at a banquet given to Earl Grey in Scotland. After bringing the matter twice before the House, Lord Brougham introduced an Indemnity Bill, which was opposed by the government, but which passed the second reading by a majority of eighteen. On the following day, Lord Melbourne announced that the ministers had resolved to advise the queen to disallow the ordinance, and Lord Durham was obliged to proclaim to the colony that it had been condemned by the government. This was the end of those "great and dictatorial powers," of those visions of Canadian peace and prosperity in which Lord Durham had indulged. A man of a less irritable temper might have been excused for resenting such an indignity. He expressed his indignation in a proclamation, which betrayed the mortification which the conduct of his friends and enemies at home had caused him. He returned to England without waiting for his recall, a broken-hearted and dying man. By the express orders of the government, the honours usually paid to a governor of Canada were

withheld from him; but he met with a hearty and sympathetic welcome from great bodies of the people. His place was filled by Sir J. Colborne, who soon made room for Mr. Poulett Thompson, afterwards Lord Sydenham, the intimate friend and disciple of the Earl of Durham, whose ideas he adopted, and whose policy he carried out under happier auspices.

Year by year the system adopted by the House of Commons in dealing with contested elections had been regarded with growing dissatisfaction. At the commencement of this session there were sixty-seven election petitions lodged, and an association had been formed, known as the Spottiswoode Committee, which raised funds and promoted petitions against Irish returns alleged to have been obtained by mob violence and intimidation. The operations of this committee were of course strongly objected to by all who were interested in maintaining the elections it sought to invalidate. But the most serious ground of complaint was the utter untrustworthiness of the tribunals, composed of members of the House of Commons, before which, in accordance with the provisions of the Grenville Act, all these petitions had to be tried. It was found that they almost invariably decided in favour of the claimant who belonged to the same party as the majority of its members. At a public dinner given to Mr. O'Connell on the 21st of February, while most of the petitions were still under investigation, that gentleman, with his usual plainness of speech, denounced the Tory committees of the House as guilty of "foul perjury." As we have seen, there was some ground for such a charge, only it was applicable not to one party only, but to all, that to which Mr. O'Connell himself belonged not excepted. Two days after the accusation was made in the terms above mentioned, Lord Maidstone read to the House the report of the speech, and asked Mr. O'Connell whether it was substantially correct. "Sir," replied the learned gentleman, "I did say every word of that, and I do repeat it, and I believe it to be perfectly true. Is there a man that will put his hand upon his heart and say, upon his honour as a gentleman, that he does not believe it to be substantially true? Such a man would be laughed to scorn."

Three nights later, Lord Maidstone, moved, "That the expression of Mr. O'Connell's speech, containing charges of foul perjury against members of this House in the discharge of their official duties, is a false and scandalous imputation upon the honour of the House." This motion was carried, notwithstanding the opposition of ministers. It was subsequently ordered that Mr. O'Connell should

be reprimanded by the Speaker. The rebuke was accordingly administered; but the honourable member, after having quietly listened to it, reasserted the charge, adding, that he wished he could find language in which he could express it which would be equally significant but less offensive.

Mr. O'Connell was not the only person who openly complained of the unfairness of the election committees. A Mr. Poulter, who had been elected a representative of the borough of Shaftesbury, was unseated on a petition. Believing that he had been unfairly treated, he gave vent to his indignation in a letter to his constituents, in which he stigmatised the decision of the committee before which the petition had been tried as "flagrant and wicked;" adding that the ignorance of its members was only second to their corruption, and that the seat had been as completely filched from him as ever a purse was from a person on the common highway. These denunciations were brought under the notice of the House; and Mr Poulter was summoned to the bar and required to retract them. Thereupon he said that he did not impute pecuniary corruption, but that he nevertheless regarded the seat as having been taken from him on political grounds alone. It was carried by a majority of two only that Mr. Poulter should be censured. On another division it was resolved that the censure should be deferred for a week; and then the matter was allowed to drop. These incidents drew general attention to the very unsatisfactory constitution of election committees, and caused public opinion to demand such a reform of them as would afford greater confidence in their decisions. Mr. O'Connell, Sir R. Peel, Mr. Slaney, and others, offered suggestions and proposed plans for their improvement; but for the present nothing was effected.

The decision of Parliament to purchase from the West Indian planters the freedom of their slaves at the enormous price of 20,000,000*l.* had by no means put an end to the question relating to slavery. The abominable traffic was still carried on in Africa, in spite of great efforts made by our government to suppress it. Nay, these efforts had actually increased the horrors with which it was attended. The unhappy Africans were packed in the hold of the slave-ship, and were not only chained, but absolutely soldered and riveted together in iron bands, so that they could not be separated till the ship in which they were imprisoned reached its destination. If the slaver was pursued by a British cruiser, numbers of these unfortunate victims were cast overboard, in order to lighten the vessel. In one case no fewer than five hundred negroes had been

thrown into the sea from a slaver chased by a British ship. Nor was this the only slavery question which demanded and obtained attention during this session. In some of our West-Indian possessions, the law by which the slaves had been emancipated was violated by many of the planters, who, under pretext of the apprenticeship permitted by the Emancipation Act, kept the negroes still in a state of virtual slavery, often inflicted on them the most humiliating punishments, the most cruel tortures, and sometimes even put them to death. The whole question, as it related to the African slave trade, and to the cruelties practised towards the negroes in the West Indies, was brought under the notice of the House of Peers by Lord Brougham. He denounced the horrors of the slave trade with characteristic vehemence, and proposed improvements in the regulations which had been made for its suppression. He also denounced the system of apprenticeship, of which he had been one of the chief authors, and by insisting on which he had caused Lord Howick's withdrawal from the ministry; but which now he admitted to be a failure. This question of apprenticeship was also taken up by Sir G. Strickland; but the efforts he made to abolish it were opposed by the government, on the ground that the labour of the slaves during the period of apprenticeship formed a part of the compensation made to the masters by the Emancipation Act.

The Queen was crowned on the 28th of June. This event awakened a feeling very different from the languid indifference with which the two preceding coronations had been regarded. It was said that the people were "coronation mad," and this phrase conveys a scarcely exaggerated idea of the feelings that prevailed. Some previous coronations had surpassed it in gorgeous display and lavish expenditure. The coronation of Victoria cost the nation 20,000*l*. more than that of William IV., but 173,000*l*. less than that of his magnificent predecessor. But on no previous occasion had there been so great a throng of foreign princes and ambassadors, such a display of splendid equipages, and such a manifestation of loyalty. For the first time since the reign of Charles II., there was a public procession, affording a large mass of the people an opportunity of being witnesses of the pageant, which for nearly two centuries had been reserved for a select few. Never before had London been so thronged. At every advantageous spot from which the procession could be seen, galleries had been erected, which were thronged with spectators. Throughout the whole line the balconies, the windows, and the housetops were all crowded,

and in many cases the windows were removed. The loudest acclamations were, of course, bestowed on the young queen; acclamations scarcely less loud greeted the Duke of Wellington. Six years ago he had been the most unpopular man in the kingdom. Now he was the most popular. With the exception of these two, the most enthusiastic greetings were bestowed on Marshal Soult, Duke of Dalmatia, the antagonist of Wellington in the Peninsula, now sent as ambassador-extraordinary to represent the French nation. The hearty welcome given to him was, no doubt, intended not only as a tribute to his personal character, but also as an expression of cordiality to the nation he represented. This enthusiastic reception of the veteran warrior made a most favourable impression on the French people, and tended more than anything else that had occurred since the peace to efface the remembrance and the resentment of past defeats.

In the mean time Irish tithes, Irish corporation reform, Irish poor-laws, and other Irish questions, were occupying, as usual, a disproportionately large share of the attention of the legislature. The poor-law was carried; several other measures had however to wait for a more favourable consideration.

Important legal reforms were adopted. As the business of the quarter sessions was rapidly increasing, and the responsibility of their chairman was rendered more onerous, on account of the alteration in the law which allowed counsel to be heard for the defendant in cases of felony, it was enacted that sessions should be held every six weeks instead of quarterly, and that in future the chair should be filled by a barrister, who would receive a salary for his services. Imprisonment for debt was abolished in certain cases, and the process for the recovery of debt was simplified and rendered more effectual. Improvements were also introduced into the laws relating to the recovery of tenements from a tenant at will. A bill to allow a mother access to her children, notwithstanding the prohibition of the father, was carried through the House of Commons by Serjeant Talfourd, but, though warmly supported by the Lord Chancellor and Lord Lyndhurst, was lost in the Upper House.

The winter of 1837-8 had been one of great and unusual severity, producing a reduplication of complaints of the hardships of the new poor-law, and of proposals for its modification. Whenever these complaints came to be closely investigated, it was found that there had been great exaggeration; and that the proposed remedies were calculated to injure rather than to improve the condition of

the industrious labourer. In fact, the chief agitators were farmers who wanted cheap labour, and idle vagabonds who looked back with regret to the time when they were maintained in luxurious indolence by the industry of others.

The government, finding that they could not carry their measures, resolved to resign; and her majesty, by the advice of Lord Melbourne, sent for the Duke of Wellington, on whose recommendation she intrusted to Sir R. Peel the task of forming a new administration, mentioning at the same time that she regretted that she had been forced to part with her late ministers, who had always given her perfect satisfaction. Notwithstanding this somewhat discouraging intimation, Sir Robert undertook the task confided to him, and delivered to her majesty a list of the principal members of his intended ministry. At the same time he thought it necessary to require the dismissal of certain ladies related to members of the late ministry, and holding high appointments in the queen's household. Her majesty refused to consent to these changes, and Sir Robert abandoned the attempt to construct a ministry. Lord Melbourne and his colleagues determined to retain their offices, thus making themselves responsible for the queen's refusal to comply with Sir R. Peel's demands. This affair produced a great deal of controversy, not only in parliament, but throughout the country. The determination of the government was vehemently assailed by their opponents, and by none more vehemently than by Lord Brougham, who taunted the ministers with having lost the confidence of the House of Commons, with never have possessed that of the House of Lords, although they had not lost the confidence of the sovereign.

It cannot be denied that the vehement invective of the ex-chancellor was not undeserved. The ministry were guilty of manifest inconsistency in resuming office after having distinctly admitted that they had lost the confidence of the legislature, and were unable to carry measures essential, in their opinion, to the well-being of the empire. However, it should be remembered, that if the Melbourne government was weak, the administration framed by Sir Robert Peel would probably have been still weaker. And putting aside altogether the bedchamber question, it is difficult to see why a government which felt that its majority was not sufficiently large should make way for a government with no majority at all, the head of which had explicitly declared that he did not intend, at least for some time to come, to appeal to the nation. Had he taken office at this time, he would probably have been compelled by an adverse vote to resign,

in the same manner as he had been when he took office before. But it would have been much better for ministers if they had never resigned. They incurred ridicule more damaging than graver censures by sheltering themselves behind the petticoats of the ladies-in-waiting; and the shout of derision which was raised against them was changed into a feeling of a more damaging character when the death of Lady Flora Hastings was supposed to have been hastened by the unjust suspicions of some of the ladies of the court. No real blame attached to any one in the matter; but the event afforded a handle against the government, of which many of its opponents availed themselves without scruple and with no little effect.

We have already mentioned, that in the year 1833 a grant of 20,000*l*. had been made for educational purposes. This grant had been voted annually ever since, and was dispensed by the lords of the treasury to the National Society and the British and Foreign School Society in aid of their educational operations. But as the amount of aid was proportioned to the size and cost of the school-buildings and to the number of scholars attending them, by far the larger portion of the grant went to the church, and this gave rise to a good deal of discontent. It was now proposed to increase the amount of the grant to 30,000*l*., and to transfer the dispensation of it to a committee composed of the president of the privy council and not more than five of its members. It was also enacted that this committee should establish a normal school for the training of masters; that they should appoint inspectors to visit schools aided by the privy council and report on their condition. They were empowered to depart from the principle of proportioning their grants to the amount of local contributions, that they might establish in poor and populous neighbourhoods schools not necessarily connected with either of the two great educational societies. They were also allowed to extend their assistance to schools in which the Roman Catholic version of the Scriptures was read.

This arrangement, which has lately been so much extolled by conservatives and churchmen, was met, when proposed to the House of Commons, with the most strenuous church and conservative opposition, and the whole country was strongly agitated against it. The scheme was objected to, as a violation of the privileges of the House of Lords, similar to that of *tacking* to a money-bill. A loud anti-popery outcry was raised against the proposed application of public money to aid schools in which the

Douay Bible was used. But the feature of the plan which excited the greatest storm of objection and vituperation was that which sanctioned the inspection of schools, and especially the inspection of the religious instruction given in them: a part of the plan which every dispassionate man must see to be most reasonable, inasmuch as it was the evident duty of the dispensers of the public funds to take care that they were applied with some tolerable fidelity to the purposes for which they were granted. But the managers of schools suffered themselves to be persuaded that the proposed inspection would lead to interference in the management of the schools. The effect of the agitation appeared in the division on the question which took place in the House of Commons. The grant was carried by a majority of two only, there being 275 in favour of it, and 273 against it. But notwithstanding the smallness of the majority, and in spite of an address to the queen from the House of Lords deprecating the proposed application of the public money, the plan was carried out by the government; and the committee of council was constituted, composed of the president of the council and five members of the government, by which the education of the country has been ever since superintended.

As the government had gone out of office on the avowed ground of the necessity that existed for dealing with the affairs of Jamaica it now became a question of great importance to determine what should be done with regard to this matter. To bring in again the rejected bill was to expose themselves to a fresh defeat, which consistency would require to be followed by a second resignation. A new bill was therefore framed, which, it was hoped, would not provoke the combination of parties by which the previous measure had been defeated. The chief feature by which this second bill was distinguished from the first, was a proviso directing that the assembly should once more be called together, and allowed a farther opportunity of adopting the measures to which the government attached so much importance. If they neglected to avail themselves of this opportunity, the governor was to be empowered to suspend their sittings, and to legislate without their concurrence. The opposition denounced this new bill as worse than the last. Sir R. Peel strenuously opposed it; but it passed the House of Commons by a majority of ten. The course which the conservative minority in the Lower House had contended for was adopted by the conservative majority in the Upper House, Lord Brougham leading the opposition with his accustomed vigour and

eloquence. When the bill came back again to the Lower House, Lord J. Russell moved that the amendments of the Lords should be accepted, as it was better that the bill should go out in the form into which the Lords' amendments had brought it than that it should not go out at all.

This was not the only attempt that ministers made to promote the freedom of the negro. They also laboured hard to induce the Portuguese government to second the efforts made by Great Britain on the coast of Africa to put down the slave-trade, and even agreed to cancel a debt of 600,000*l.* due from that government, on an express stipulation that it would cease from countenancing the abominable traffic. Hitherto, however, the Portuguese government had eluded the performance of their engagements. A bill brought forward by the government empowering them to deal with the matter was strongly opposed by the Duke of Wellington, and rejected by a small majority. But a motion was proposed by Lord Brougham for an address to the crown, "praying her majesty, by all the means in her majesty's power, to negotiate with the governments of foreign nations, as well in America as in Europe, for their concurrence in effectually putting down the traffic in slaves; and also that her majesty will be graciously pleased to give such orders to her majesty's cruisers as may be most efficacious in stopping the said traffic, more especially that carried on under the Portuguese and Brazilian flag, or by Portuguese and Brazilian ships, assuring her majesty that this House will cheerfully concur with the other House of Parliament in whatever means may be rendered necessary, if her majesty shall be graciously pleased to comply with this prayer."

The address was unanimously adopted, and the queen in her reply, transmitted through the Duke of Argyll, assured the House that she would direct orders to be given to her cruisers in accordance with their wishes.

Afterwards another bill, founded on that which had been rejected by the House of Lords, but modified in a manner calculated to obviate the objections which had been urged against it, was brought into the House of Commons by the government. It passed through all its stages in the Lower House, and was strongly supported in the House of Lords by the ministry and by Lord Brougham. But in spite of the modifications which had been introduced, and notwithstanding some amendments made by the Lords, with a view to remove the objections which had been made against it, the Duke of Wellington still vigorously opposed it,

protesting against it, and denouncing what he termed its criminal character; declaring it to be a breach of the law of nations, a violation of international treaties, and a measure rather calculated to promote than to prevent the traffic against which its enactments were levelled. In spite of this strong condemnation of the bill, in spite of the great influence which the duke at this time exercised over the opinions and votes of the peers, the feeling against the slave trade proved too strong to be resisted. The bill passed the Lords on the 20th of August, and the Lords' amendments having been accepted by the Commons, it received the royal assent.

The budget of this year was brought forward at the unusually late period of the 5th of July. Its most noticeable and interesting feature was the bold adoption of a new and uniform system of postage, the immediate effect of which must necessarily be a great loss of revenue; and this with a deficit already amounting to a million and a half. Up to this time the rates of postage on letters were very heavy, and varied according to the distance. For instance, a single letter conveyed from one part of a town to another cost 2*d* ; a letter from Reading to London, 7*d*. · from Brighton, 8*d* ; from Aberdeen, 1*s*. 3½*d*., from Belfast, 1*s*. 4*d*. If the letter was written on more than a single sheet, the postage was much higher. Early in 1837 a pamphlet was published by Mr. Rowland Hill, in which he showed that the actual cost of the conveyance of letters through the post was very trifling, and very little increased by the distance over which they had to be conveyed; and advocated with great ingenuity and a strong array of facts the substitution of one uniform postage of a penny the half-ounce, in place of the heavy and various rates of postage that then prevailed. It happened that a commission was engaged in inquiring into the management of the post-office department at the very time that his pamphlet appeared. They had concluded their inquiries relative to the general post, and had entered on the investigation of the twopenny post, when their attention was drawn to Mr. Hill's plan; to which they determined to give a careful consideration. The post-office authorities expressed an unfavourable opinion of the scheme, basing their objections to it on the loss of revenue, which they thought its adoption would involve. In spite of their dissent, the commissioners reported in favour of the plan. The attention thus gained for it, both in parliament and throughout the country, produced a strong admiration of the boldness and excellence of Mr. Hill's ideas. When parliament assembled in November, 1837, Mr. Wallace, a zealous advocate of the proposed scheme, obtained a committee "to inquire

into the present rates and mode of charging postage, with a view to such reduction thereof as may be made without injury to the revenue; and for this purpose to examine especially the mode recommended for charging and collecting postage in the pamphlet of Mr. Hill." This committee, notwithstanding the strongly expressed contrary opinion of the postmaster-general, and the greater part of the post-office officials examined by them, recommended uniform charges, and prepayment by stamps. They also expressed an opinion that the revenue would not ultimately suffer, but, as they considered themselves bound by the terms of the vote under which they were appointed to recommend a plan which would not involve even a temporary loss of revenue, they recommended that for the present a uniform rate of twopence on the half-ounce should be adopted. In 1838 and 1839 numerous and numerous signed petitions were presented in favour of Mr. Hill's plan, and the government, notwithstanding the large deficiency that already existed, resolved to adopt it, thus affording a noble example to the world, and one that has been followed by every civilised state. They also abolished, except in the case of official letters on government business, the privilege of *franking*, or sending letters free through the post, which had hitherto been enjoyed by members of parliament to a limited, and by members of the government to an unlimited, extent. The House of Commons, by a solemn resolution, pledged itself to provide for any deficit in the revenue which this measure might cause. The proposal met with strong opposition from various quarters. The officials of the post-office, almost to a man, were hostile to it. Even the enlightened Sydney Smith stigmatised it as the "nonsensical penny-postage scheme." In the Lower House it was condemned, chiefly on financial grounds, by Sir R. Peel and Mr. Goulburn, but it passed, notwithstanding their objections. When the measure came before the Upper House, the Duke of Wellington said that there was not one clause in the bill on which they could make an amendment or give a vote, except in the affirmative or negative, without committing a breach of those conventional rules which had been established for the conduct of business between them and the House of Commons. He therefore announced that, notwithstanding the strong objections he entertained against the scheme, he should feel himself obliged to vote for the bill; and he entreated the House to pass it because it was most anxiously expected by the country. The peers followed this recommendation; and thus another great change, then regarded by eminent statesmen as very rash and hazardous, but now acknow-

ledged by all men to be fraught with moral, intellectual, and physical advantage to the community, was adopted by the legislature, and soon brought into operation. For a few weeks the postage was maintained at fourpence, in order to prevent the servants of the post-office from being overwhelmed by a sudden and enormous increase in the number of letters. Then it was reduced to a penny.

During the winter very severe distress prevailed throughout the kingdom; and the session of 1840 commenced under somewhat gloomy auspices. The queen, in the speech with which she opened the session, announced that a marriage had been arranged between herself and Prince Albert of Saxe-Gotha. In the debate on the address in answer to this speech, the Duke of Wellington proposed the insertion in it of the word "Protestant," before prince. This suggestion was assented to by Lord Melbourne. In the Commons, the first question was that of the allowance to be made to the prince on his marriage with the queen. The government proposed that it should be 50,000*l*, Mr. Hume 21,000*l*., and Colonel Sibthorp, 30,000*l*. The last mentioned proposition was supported by the leaders of the conservative party, except Sir R. Inglis, who advocated the more generous vote proposed by the government; but in the disordered state of the finances, and the distressed condition of the country, it was thought better to adopt the more moderate allowance of 30,000*l*.; and that sum was accordingly voted by a large majority.

The Stockdale case occupied a large share of the attention of the House of Commons. Messrs Hansard, the printers of the House of Commons, having been condemned at Stockdale's suit for a libel contained in papers printed under its orders, Stockdale brought action after action against the Hansards, who appealed to the House for protection from penalties incurred in carrying out its orders. Lord J. Russell strongly insisted that the House was bound in honour, as well as by a regard for its own privileges, to support its printers, who had acted under its authority. He was supported not only by the leading members of his own party, including the attorney-general, but also by Sir R. Peel, Lord Stanley, and Sir J. Graham. Stockdale, Stockdale's attorney, the sheriffs of London, and several other persons who were concerned, either in bringing the action or carrying out the sentence of the Court of Queen's Bench, were brought to the bar of the house. The sheriffs pleaded that they were acting under the authority of the court, and in accordance with the oath they had taken to it. But, in spite of this plea, they were incarcerated; and, on being out a writ of habeas corpus, were

sent back to prison, the serjeant-at-arms, in whose custody they had been placed, having declared that they had been committed for breach of privilege on an order of the House of Commons. Subsequently one of the sheriffs was released by order of the house, his medical attendant having certified that his life would be endangered by a prolonged confinement. An application for the release of his colleague on the same grounds was rejected. Meanwhile Stockdale continued to bring fresh actions; and actions were also brought by other parties against Messrs. Hansard on similar grounds. The position of the House of Commons became every day more and more embarrassing. It was evident that public opinion strongly condemned its proceedings. The sheriffs, when summoned to attend at the bar of the house, were enthusiastically cheered throughout their whole progress; and when they were brought before the Court of Queen's Bench on a writ of habeas corpus, the reception given them was equally enthusiastic. There can be little doubt that the majority of the House of Commons were right in asserting a privilege indispensable to the due performance of their functions. It was necessary that they should have the power of publishing to the country the evidence taken on questions of general importance, and thus furnishing the public with the means of forming a sound opinion with regard to them. Sir R. Peel put this necessity in a very clear light, when he asked the members of the House, "Do you believe that slavery would have been abolished unless we had published to the world the evidence of the abuses and horrors of slavery?" But if this power was necessary to the House, it was equally necessary that it should have the power of protecting those employed by it to publish its proceedings from vexatious prosecutions and ruinous damages. The privilege would have been useless, if it could have been rendered inoperative through the impossibility of finding agents who would incur the responsibility to which the publication of the proceedings would expose them. If, therefore, the House did not enjoy the powers claimed for it, clearly it ought to possess them. But the clumsy and antiquated methods of enforcing the privileges of the House by reprimands and incarcerations of persons who were only fulfilling duties the law imposed on them, and observing oaths they had taken in obedience to its requirements, were not suited to the spirit of the age, and placed the House in a very unfortunate and undignified position. It was therefore felt and acknowledged by the strongest assertors of the privileges of the House of Commons that other methods must be resorted to. Accordingly Lord J. Russell, acting on suggestions thrown out by

several members, and with the concurrence and approval of Sir R. Peel, introduced a declaratory bill, which was carried through both Houses of Parliament with a few amendments, and thus put an end to this troublesome and undignified contest.

The evident and increasing weakness of the government induced their opponents to endeavour to turn them out of office by a direct vote of want of confidence. A motion for that object, proposed by Sir J. Y. Buller, and seconded by our inadvertent friend Alderman Thompson, after a very long debate was rejected by a majority of twenty-one, another motion, brought forward by Sir J. Graham, condemning their Chinese policy, was only defeated by a majority of nine. It was evident that the conservative party was gaining strength, while their adversaries were every day becoming weaker; and it seemed more than probable that they would be speedily placed in a minority on some question which would render their resignation unavoidable; so that their removal from power, and the accession of Sir Robert Peel to it, appeared to be only a question of a very short time. Under such circumstances it was useless for the Whigs to continue to press the policy of the appropriation clause. They felt that in bringing forward that question in the then existing state of public feeling and opinion they had made a great mistake, which had contributed more than anything else to place them in the position of weakness in which they now found themselves. On the other hand, the conservatives were anxious that a reform of the Irish corporations, which they felt could not be much longer resisted, should be carried; and thus both parties and their leaders had come to an understanding, dictated by their common interests, that a settlement of the tithe question and of the Irish corporation question should be effected by mutual concession. Accordingly the long-delayed measure of Irish municipal reform was carried through both Houses, encountering many protests, but no serious opposition. In vain did stout-hearted Sir Robert Inglis denounce it as a heavy blow and great discouragement to Protestantism, in vain did the Bishop of Exeter proclaim the surprise and disappointment with which he viewed the conduct of his friends. His eloquent predictions of the disasters which would follow from such a dereliction of principle were unheeded; and the bill, so long held in suspense, was allowed to pass.

A registration of voters (Ireland) bill, proposed by Lord Stanley, met with determined opposition from the ministerial party and the followers of O'Connell. The latter strongly denounced it,

and gave it an unscrupulous opposition. Nevertheless, it was carried forward through the second reading; and in the committee, on no fewer than nine divisions, there was only one division in which a majority voted against any part of the plan. But the Fabian tactics of Mr. O'Connell prevailed, and Lord Stanley withdrew the measure; finding that in five days only five out of forty clauses which the bill contained had been passed, and knowing that it was impossible that it should be carried through during the session. Four other bills relating to the question of Irish registration were withdrawn by the government, on account of the lateness of the session. The same fate, overtook Sergeant Talfourd's copyright bill, and Mr. Ewart's for the abolition of the punishment of death.

The financial statement of the chancellor of the exchequer, if not altogether satisfactory, was at least reassuring. Notwithstanding the great reduction of the post-office revenue, consequent on the introduction of the new penny-post system, the deficiency for the year ending April 5, 1840, only exceeded that of the preceding year by 273*l.*, which the chancellor proposed to meet by increasing the assessed taxes ten per cent., the customs and excise, with some exceptions, five per cent., and the duty on spirits fourpence by the gallon. These proposals were adopted.

The bill which embodied the recommendations of the ecclesiastical commissioners relative to the cathedral chapters now went through both houses with very little opposition. A bill having been passed appointing Prince Albert to be regent in case of the death of the queen, the session was closed by her majesty in person on the 11th of August. On the 10th of February the queen's marriage with Prince Albert was celebrated with all fitting pomp and splendour. It would have been impossible to have found any one who would have better discharged his duties as a husband and a father, would have more diligently devoted himself to the peculiar and delicate functions which devolved on him as consort of the Queen of England, or would have kept more completely and conscientiously within the lines of the British constitution.

On the 10th of June an insane potboy named Oxford attempted to assassinate the queen by discharging two pistols at her, as she was driving out with Prince Albert. Both displayed great coolness and presence of mind. It was never ascertained, except by the untrustworthy admission of Oxford himself, whether the pistols were charged with bullets or not. On the twenty-first day of the following November her majesty gave birth to her eldest child—the present Crown Princess of Prussia.

In the course of this year the Eastern Question seemed likely to give rise to very serious complications. The Pacha of Egypt not only rejected the authority of his sovereign the Sultan, but endeavoured to persuade the other pachas of the Ottoman empire to join him in his revolt, and to make himself master of Syria. The Sultan, unable to subdue his rebellious vassal, had recourse to England, to France, to his old enemy Russia, which was supposed to cherish the design of assuming a protectorate over Turkey, with a view to its ultimate absorption. England and France were unable to agree between themselves. While the English government acted on her traditionary policy of supporting the Sultan, that of France seemed rather inclined to ally itself with the Pacha, or to preserve a dubious and menacing neutrality. The combined fleets attacked the strongly fortified town of Acro, which they speedily captured, and thus defeated the designs of the Egyptian pacha, who could not maintain his conquest against such a combination of powerful and civilized states.

The year 1841 opened auspiciously for the government. Abroad victory had crowned their arms, and success had attended their diplomacy. The agricultural, manufacturing, and commercial interests were prospering, and peace and contentment seemed everywhere to prevail. It was therefore seen with little disappointment that the Queen's speech of this year was even more barren in promises of progressive reforms than the royal speeches of previous years had been. The Whig government had evidently made up its mind to "rest and be thankful," and its chief was too busy in attendance at the court, and too much engrossed with its amusements, to be able, even if he had been willing, to assist in framing any great measures for the consideration of parliament. It was evident that the government was resting on the favour of the Queen rather than on the support of the House of Commons and the people, and though such a state of things would soon be brought to an end in a period of political earnestness, it seemed likely to endure for some time longer in a period of political apathy. The ministry was indeed almost sure to be defeated and compelled to resign, if it brought forward great and important measures; but it might avoid that danger by political inaction.

Lord Stanley lost no time in fulfilling the promise he had given when he withdrew his registration bill. On the very first day of this session he gave notice that it was his intention again to press his plan on the attention of parliament. Lord Morpeth also announced that the government intended to deal with the

question in a bill of their own, which would include a definition of the qualification of the franchise, the want of which was one of the strongest objections that had been urged against Lord Stanley's plan in the debates on it which had taken place during the last session. The discussion on the second reading of this measure terminated in a division which gave ministers a majority of five, a majority clearly insufficient to enable them to carry it through committee, much less to lead them to hope that it would pass the Upper House. After a good deal of parliamentary manoeuvring they found themselves in a minority of eleven, and Lord J. Russell then withdrew the bill. This ministerial defeat on the most important question of the session was decisive of the question itself. If Lord Morpeth had not succeeded in carrying his bill, he had at least succeeded in rendering it impossible for Lord Stanley to carry his. It was too late to allow any hope of its passing; and therefore a reform the necessity of which was admitted on all hands was once more relegated to another session. The manner in which ministers had dealt with this matter seriously damaged them, and increased the number of defections from their ranks. Their position was one of immense difficulty and embarrassment. The exceeding smallness of their majority enabled the Lords to deal with the measures that came up to them in a way they would not have ventured to do if the government had enjoyed the confidence of a large majority of the House of Commons, or had been supported by the public opinion of the country.

It must not, however, be supposed that these ministerial defeats were entirely due to the weakness of the liberal party. There were many votes of this session which strongly testified its real predominance. Thus the Jews' Disabilities Bill, introduced again, and perhaps affording as good a test as could be found of the strength of the liberal feeling that existed in the House, was read a second time by a majority of 113, and carried through the Lower House, only to be once more rejected by the Lords. We pass by the non-intrusion question, of immense importance to the Scottish nation, and exercising a great influence over the history of Scotland, but not appreciably affecting the course of events in this country; the affairs of Canada, now united into one dominion, and becoming gradually tranquilized; the Maynooth grant, the church-rate question, which emerged for a moment, and was soon sucked under again by the whirlpool of party struggles, the abortive attempts of the attorney-general and Sir E. Sugden to effect a reform of the Court of Chancery. However, one beneficial measure promoted by the ministers was

carried through this session. They took out of the hands of Mr. Fitzroy Kelly a bill for the abolition of capital punishment in certain cases, and brought in a bill of their own, which was carried, and had the effect of substituting transportation for life in the place of death in cases of forgery, embezzlement, and rape.

The government made one bold effort to recover the ground it had lost, and to draw to itself once more the sympathies of the great body of the nation. It was generally expected that the budget of this year would contain some great financial reforms, on which the government intended to make its appeal to the country. This expectation was confirmed when Lord J. Russell announced that he intended to move on the 31st of May the following resolution: "That the House should resolve itself into a committee of the whole House, to consider the act of parliament relating to the trade in corn" From this it was evident that the government had resolved to make the question of the corn-laws the working question of the coming election, and to stake their political existence on the alterations they had determined to make in them. This question was forcing itself more and more strongly every year on the attention of the government. There had been a great increase of population, a succession of bad harvests had occurred, Russia, Sweden, America, and France had adopted retaliatory tariffs. Scarcity thus produced had engendered discontent, which manifested itself in chartist outbreaks and other violences. There were, too, special reasons in favour of a reconsideration of the corn-laws, with a view to some relaxation of their stringency. Our treaties with the United States and Brazil were on the point of expiring, and must be speedily revised, and the Zollverein, which had imposed very heavy duties on British manufactures, would have an opportunity of readjusting them. A diminution of our duties on the admission of their corn would probably be followed by concessions on their part. But the strongest argument in favour of change was founded on the state of the finances, which had become such that in this year the income fell short of the expenditure by more than 2,101,307*l*. Such were the motives which determined the ministry to deal with the corn-laws, notwithstanding the hostility which they knew would be excited by an attempt to alter them; and thus commenced in good earnest the great anti-corn-law struggle, which, hitherto carried on in languid and ineffectual skirmishes, henceforward became the most important question of the time, and the cause of the rise and falling again of many parties, giving no peace to England until its final settle-

ment had been effected. It is true that Harvey, Molesworth, Grote, Villiers, Poulett Thompson, and many others had already pointed out the mischief that these laws did, and had repeatedly urged those arguments which at length induced parliament and the nation to sweep away the so-called protection they afforded to the agricultural interest. But the public mind was only slowly and gradually awakened to the necessity that existed for their abrogation.

The debate that ensued was nominally on the sugar duties, but it was felt that the decision on that question would involve the acceptance or rejection of the ministerial plan as a whole; and therefore the discussion turned on the question of the fixed duty on corn, and on the timber duties, as well as on the subject more immediately before the House. The ministerial plan was regarded as involving the encouragement of the produce of the sugars of Cuba and other slave states at the expense of our own colonies, in which slavery had been so recently abolished; and many liberal members of the anti-slavery party opposed it, as tending, in their opinion, to defeat the great experiment of free negro labour, which was being so successfully carried out in our West-Indian possessions. They were joined in their opposition to it by the agricultural party, many of whom were Whigs, but all of whom were greatly incensed and alarmed at the proposal of a fixed duty, which they justly regarded as a prelude to the abolition of all duties on foreign corn. Sir R. Peel declared his decided preference for a sliding scale, and his belief that a fixed duty could not be maintained. The long debate ended with a division on the question, that the Speaker do now leave the chair, which was decided against the government by a majority of 36, there being 281 in favour of the motion, and 317 against it.

There was a very general expectation that this great defeat would be followed either by the resignation of the government or an appeal to the country. Astonishment, therefore, was mingled with disappointment when the chancellor of the exchequer, rising in his place as if nothing extraordinary had occurred, quietly gave notice that on the following Monday he should move the usual sugar duties, and the surprise and disappointment were increased when Lord J. Russell, without giving any explanation whatever of the course he proposed to adopt, moved that the House should adjourn to the following Monday. On that day Sir R. Peel announced, amidst the tumultuous cheering of his followers, that it was his intention to propose a vote of want of confidence in the ministry. The motion was carried by a majority of one, there being 312 votes in favour of it, and 311 against it. This was of course a condemna-

tion which no government could brook. Lord J. Russell announced that he would state on the following Monday the course which the government would adopt. Accordingly on that evening there was the same anxious and excited curiosity which had been displayed on the occasion of the last ministerial defeat. The House and all the avenues leading to it were once more gorged with an anxious and impatient multitude. This time they were not disappointed. Ministers, after maturely weighing the two alternatives of resignation and dissolution, had determined to adopt the latter. Lord J. Russell announced that the government intended to advise the crown to dissolve the present parliament, and to summon another without delay. The moribund parliament sat for about a fortnight longer, engaged in winding up the business of the session, and passing as quickly as possible through their various stages the measures which needed to be carried before the prorogation.

Every nerve was strained by both parties to gain a majority in this election. The conservatives appealed to every class of persons who had been injured, or could be made to imagine that they had been injured, by the measures of the ministry. The friends of the church were reminded of the attempts that had been made to carry the appropriation clause, and her enemies of its abandonment. The army and the navy were conjured to exert all the influence they possessed to throw out a ministry which was likely to make great reductions in both services. The moneyed interest was called on to use its influence against a government which had increased the national debt, and caused a deficit of seven millions. The colonial and shipping interests were incited to resist the losses with which they were threatened by the measures of the Whig administration. The manufacturers were exhorted to withdraw their support from a government which would render their situation even more precarious than it was already. The landed interest and the British farmers were plied with predictions of the ruin which would follow the withdrawal of protection. The working classes were assured that the delusive promise of cheap bread would be followed by the stern reality of low wages. Loyal subjects and chartists were exhorted to remember that the ministry had first encouraged public meetings, and then violently suppressed them; first made Frost a magistrate, and then, without any change of opinion on his part, caused him to be sentenced to death for high treason. The sticklers for the constitution were conjured not to forget how ministers had regained office through the influence of the ladies of the bedchamber, after having admitted that they no

longer possessed the confidence of the legislature. The friends of religion and morality were implored to vote against the minister who had presented Robert Owen, the socialist, to a young and innocent queen; and every lover of his country was invoked to use his vote and influence against the patiens, or rather the slaves, of O'Connell and the Irish repealers. It was true that the other side met these election cries with others of a like character. At the London election shilling and twopenny loaves were placed on the top of poles, and were respectively ticketed as the Russell loaf and the Peel loaf. But these cries were less effective than those raised by the opponents of the government, for the simple reason that, with one short exception, the Whigs had enjoyed ten years of power, and had incurred those enmities which are sure to overtake every government that remains many years in office. There can be no doubt, too, that the Whigs had made a great mistake in the choice of the question on which they appealed to the country. By making their stand on the question of a fixed duty, they obtained the cold and languid preference of the radical and free-trade parties, the latter of which had not as yet attained that numerical force which it subsequently acquired, while they failed to evoke that popular zeal and enthusiasm which alone could have enabled them to withstand the combination of parties whose supposed interests they either touched or menaced. In the English counties, where the voters had been led to believe that free trade was agricultural ruin, the conservatives gained twenty-two seats, and in the boroughs seven. In Scotland they gained two, and in Ireland eight. They therefore reckoned that in the new parliament Sir R. Peel would be able to command a majority of about seventy-six. The city of London, which had returned four Whigs to the last Parliament, sent two conservatives and two Whigs to the new House of Commons. A conservative headed the poll, while Lord J. Russell only escaped defeat by a few votes. In the West Riding of Yorkshire two conservatives, the Hon. S. Wortley and Mr. Denison, defeated Lords Morpeth and Milton. Two conservatives represented the Irish metropolis, though Mr. O'Connell was again a candidate for that city.

This result was hailed by the Tories as a great triumph and pointed at as a proof of a national conservative reaction. It was, rather, a condemnation of the financial policy of the Melbourne administration, for allowing so enormous a deficiency to grow up; and a vote of confidence in the financial superiority of Sir R. Peel. This opinion was perhaps unjust to the party which had certainly produced a large deficit, but which had

done so by carrying on wars in India, China, and Syria, in which any government in office at the same time would probably have engaged, and by adopting such salutary changes as the reduction of the stamp-duties on newspapers, and the penny postage—bold and important reforms which Sir R. Peel had all along condemned and opposed, and for the sake of which it was well worth while to incur some temporary embarrassment. It is also to be remembered, that it is by no means certain that Lord J. Russell's fiscal scheme would have failed to fill up, to a very considerable extent, the financial chasm which he was endeavouring to deal with. Mr McCulloch, the highest authority on such a question, calculated that the sliding scale produced an average duty of 5s 9d. on each quarter of wheat, while Lord J. Russell's fixed duty would have produced 8s. Thus the revenue arising from the duty on corn would have been increased about forty per cent. and the greater certainty which a fixed duty would have given to the movements of commerce would have produced a largely increased importation of wheat, and thus have doubled, or more than doubled, the revenue arising from this source alone, not to mention the result which would have been obtained by the changes which Lord J. Russell proposed to make in the sugar and the timber duties. The misfortune was, that the Whig proposition came too late; and then, instead of obtaining the consideration to which its merits entitled it, was unjustly regarded as a makeshift, adopted on the spur of the moment to prop up a falling ministry. In estimating these measures, too, it should not be forgotten that though the Whig government on this occasion took its stand resolutely, and we may almost say obstinately, on the plan of a fixed duty, for which, in the state of the finances, much might be plausibly advanced, yet they were so closely connected with and so dependent on the free-trade party, their own sympathies were so entirely with that party, and the fixed duty had so much less power of resistance than the sliding scale, that it is probable that if the Whigs had obtained a majority at this election they would have been forced to adopt the policy of free trade at an earlier period than that at which Sir R. Peel found himself compelled to become the patron of the system of which he had been the leading opponent.

On the re-assembling of parliament, ministers were defeated by a majority of 68. They then resigned, and the formation of a new government was entrusted to Sir R. Peel, who effected the task thus imposed on him without much difficulty. The Duke of Wellington had a seat in the cabinet without holding any office, and led the government in the Upper House.

CHAPTER VIII

THE INCOME AND PROPERTY TAX.

THE members of the new government whose seats had been vacated by their acceptance of office were all re-elected, and parliament met again on the 16th of September. The new premier announced that he intended to adopt without alteration the estimates framed by the late government, to renew the new poor-law provisionally, and to make such other arrangements as were absolutely required, but to defer to the next session the development of those financial measures which he deemed it necessary to bring forward. He promised, however, that they should have the effect of equalizing the revenue and expenditure of the country, either by increasing the former or diminishing the latter. Lord J. Russell and his adherents strongly remonstrated against this arrangement; reminding the House of the distress that prevailed in the manufacturing districts, and bitterly complaining that, after a plan which they believed would have the effect of restoring the revenue and filling up the deficiency had been rejected, another five months should be wasted. To these representations Sir Robert Peel replied by urging the necessity of proceeding with caution and deliberation in a matter of so much importance, and by declaring that he should only be countenancing a fatal delusion if he were to encourage the belief that it was possible for parliament to adopt any measures by which the prevailing distress could be immediately relieved. The necessary business was therefore pushed forward as rapidly as possible, and on the 7th of October parliament was prorogued by commission. The vacation was employed by the government, and especially by its chief, in diligently studying the financial position of the country, and preparing the measures which seemed to be required in order to place the revenue and expenditure of the country on a satisfactory footing.

The new minister did not leave the country long in suspense with regard to the manner in which he proposed to deal with the corn-laws. Parliament, was formally opened on the 3rd of February and on the 9th Sir Robert unfolded his plan for the settlement of the corn-law question. He proposed at once to maintain the sliding scale and to improve it. The duties were to be lowered, the oscillations to be confined within narrow limits, the jumps and jerks which attended the working of the old sliding scale were to be avoided, and the public protected from the artifices and frauds which had been practised under it. Lord J. Russell moved an amendment condemning the principle of a sliding scale. After a debate extending over four nights the government triumphed on a division by the large majority of 123. This debate was followed by another, extending over five evenings, on an amendment moved by Mr. Villiers for the entire abolition of all duties on corn. Two remarkable speeches were delivered in the course of this discussion in support of Mr. Villiers' motion—one by Mr. (afterwards Lord) Macaulay, the other by Mr. Cobden, who, already enjoying the confidence of the Anti-corn-law League which had become a great power in the state, now commanded the attention of the House of Commons by the lucid and unadorned eloquence with which he placed true and enlightened views of this question in a light so clear that it was almost impossible for men whose minds were not blinded by supposed interest or party spirit to refuse to recognize their justice. The amendment proposed by Mr. Villiers was rejected by a majority of 303, and another moved by Mr. Christopher, who wished to substitute a higher scale of duties for that proposed by Sir R. Peel, was rejected by a majority of 202. The government plan was, after long discussion, approved by both Houses.

The greatest of all the difficulties that Sir Robert Peel had had to deal with was the financial condition of the country. There was an estimated deficiency in the revenue for the ensuing year of 2,570,000*l.*, and to this was to be added a considerable sum, of uncertain amount, on account of China and India. This deficiency Sir Robert had pledged himself to make up; and it was the confidence that was felt in his financial skill and dexterity that had contributed more than any other cause to the signal triumph of his party at the late general election.

The task he had undertaken was not an easy one, for the taxation of the country was already heavy, and as it applied to almost every article that could possibly be taxed, it did not seem to admit of

much increase. But the new minister had determined not only to fill up the gulf of deficiency, but to obtain a surplus which he would apply to the remission of taxes that weighed heavily on the springs of industry. The means by which he proposed to accomplish this aim was the imposition of an income and property tax; a most unpopular impost, and one which it was therefore believed by his opponents that Sir R. Peel would not venture to propose, nor the country consent to accept; but its acquiescence was purchased by the reduction or abolition of burdensome and mischievous taxes on 750 out of 1200 articles which at that time were subject to customs duties. He thus inaugurated a new system of finance, which he afterwards pushed to an extent that he had not originally contemplated, which has been still further developed by his successors, and still continues to be carried forward. Nevertheless he did not venture to recommend that the income-tax should be saddled on the country as a permanent institution, but proposed it with the expectation that at the end of a few years, having accomplished the objects for which it was imposed, the minister of the day would be able to dispense with it.

The third reading of the bill which embodied Sir R. Peel's plan was carried in the Lower House by a majority of 71.

Thus triumph of the income-tax involved the triumph of the new tariff. It was evident that so unpopular a tax would not have been supported by large majorities in both Houses if its supporters had not been influenced by the hope that the benefits arising from the proposed changes in the duties would more than balance the incidence and the hardships of an impost so thoroughly unpopular. Some important alterations having been introduced, in consequence of representations made to the government, the House went into committee on the tariff thus amended on the 5th of May. Long discussions ensued, every detail of the measure was scrutinized; the strongest opposition was that made to the duties on timber and on the importation of cattle, the refusal to lower the duties on sugar, and to the general policy of the differential duties, which were another form of protection. As the discussion proceeded, public opinion pronounced itself more and more loudly in favour of the new tariff. Particular interests might complain, but the nation was satisfied. The measure was carried victoriously through both Houses; and it was confidently anticipated that it would remedy the disorders of the finances, and draw after it a great revival of national prosperity.

The copyright question repeatedly but vainly brought forward

by Serjeant Talfourd was settled during this session, though he was no longer in the House to advocate it. The sixty years' copyright asked for in the bill originally presented to the House of Commons was not obtained; but the author was allowed to retain his property in his works during his life, and his family continued to possess it for seven years after his death. In any case, it was to be enjoyed for at least forty-two years by the author and his family.

The period we have now reached was honourably distinguished by disinterested efforts to benefit the most helpless and unprotected classes of society. This disposition showed itself in parliament by factory bills, education bills, and bills designed to put an end to the over-working and ill-treatment of women and children in mines and factories. Out of parliament it displayed itself in early-closing movements, attempts to relieve superannuated and infirm governesses, the erection of model cottages and lodging-houses, and many other benevolent and philanthropic works or designs.

The changes which had been made in the mode of electing members of the House of Commons had not by any means put an end to the corrupt practices that had long prevailed at elections. The recent election had been attended by more corruption than ever. Great efforts had been made by the Carlton Club and the conservatives generally to raise a large sum to "fight the battle of the constitution," and the reformers and the Reform Club, though less wealthy, had done what they could. More money had been expended by the candidates themselves than at any election which had taken place since the passing of the Reform Bill. New forms of bribery and corruption had been invented, a very large number of election petitions had been lodged, and new devices had been employed to defeat the inquiries that were made before the election committees. To one of these especially Mr. Roebuck drew the attention of the House. He stated that he had strong reasons for believing that several election petitions had been corruptly compromised. When a member was charged with bribery before the committee, and it became evident that the proceedings would end in a declaration that the seat was void, the petition was suddenly withdrawn, apparently without any motive, but really on the strength of a secret engagement entered into by the sitting member and his principal friends to use their best efforts to procure the unopposed return of the petitioner. Mr. Roebuck named several boroughs which had been the subject of these corrupt bargains, and interrogated the members of those boroughs with regard to them. As the replies they made to his questions were unsatisfactory, he proposed

and carried the appointment of a committee to inquire into the matter. The report of this committee, founded on careful and secret examination of a great number of witnesses, fully confirmed Mr. Roebuck's statements. It denounced the practices which he had unmasked as violations of the liberties of the people, and breaches of the privileges of the House of Commons, and recommended that the House should inquire into all cases in which there were good grounds for suspecting that such practices had been resorted to, and severely punish those who were guilty of them. The committee also recommended that no new writs should be issued for Harwich, Nottingham, Lewes, Reading, Falmouth, and Penrhyn, till farther measures had been taken by the House to protect the purity of election in those boroughs.

Corrupt practices like those which Mr. Roebuck's committee had exposed were so common, and the members interested in preventing farther proceedings in the matter so numerous, that the first resolution proposed by Mr. Roebuck was rejected by a majority large enough to show that it would be useless to press the others, and they were accordingly withdrawn. The government, however, determined to show their disapproval of such practices by refusing to grant the stewardship of the Chiltern Hundreds to members whom they had reason to believe to have entered into these objectionable compromises. After long discussions the writs to boroughs in which bribery had been shown to prevail were allowed to be issued, except that of Sudbury, in which gross and systematic corruption had been carried to an extent which seemed to mark it out for disfranchisement. But Lord J. Russell introduced a bill intended to diminish bribery, check corrupt practices, and facilitate the punishment of boroughs in which corruption could be proved to have generally prevailed. This measure, which was tolerably well calculated to effect the objects it had in view, passed the Lower House with a few modifications, and was adopted by the House of Lords without any change.

While the House of Commons was busied with those great financial reforms which were the most conspicuous features in the legislation of the session, Lord Lyndhurst was engaged in the other House in proposing to it measures of legal reform which were no less imperatively required. Bills were introduced by him designed to improve the bankruptcy and lunacy courts, and to facilitate the recovery of small debts by establishing county courts, or rather by improving the character and extending the jurisdiction of courts which already existed under that name to very little purpose,

because, as then constituted, they afforded few guarantees of the impartiality or correctness of their decisions. The two first of these bills were passed; the third was withdrawn at a late period of the session for want of time to carry it through. Attempts made by Lord Campbell to transfer the jurisdiction of the Privy Council to the House of Lords, and by Lord Francis Egerton to amend the marriage laws, were defeated.

We must now turn to India, where a terrible disaster, shaking our empire there to its very foundations, had been terribly redeemed. The country of Afghanistan, situated at the north-western extremity of our Indian possessions, inhabited by a brave, warlike, but barbarous race, and defended by formidable natural barriers, had been occupied by a British force, the greater part of which was stationed at Cabul. The communications with these troops were carried on through the Koord Cabul Pass, a long defile which a small body of determined men might defend against an army. The custody of this pass was claimed by an Afghan tribe, who called themselves Ghilzies, and the Indian government thought it better to pay them to keep the pass open for our troops and convoys than to be obliged to force it every time that it was necessary to communicate with Cabul. The Ghilzies seem to have acted with good faith, although they had been much irritated by the storming of a fort held by some of their tribe, in which several of its defenders were killed. But the agreement was unfortunately violated on our side by the negligent withholding of a portion of the sum we had stipulated to pay them. Indignant at what appeared to be a breach of faith, they at once rose in arms, stopped the pass, cut off all communication between Cabul and British India, and seized a *Kasla* valued at 20,000 rupees. General Elphinstone, who commanded the English troops at Cabul, at once dispatched General Sale, with a brigade of light infantry and sipoys, to clear the pass and restore the communication. The general encountered a brave resistance from the Ghilzies, and received a severe wound in his leg; but the defiles were successively forced, and the troops reached Gundamuck on the 30th of October, 1841, and then fought their way to Jellalabad, where they arrived on the 12th of November.

Meanwhile General Elphinstone neglected to take the most ordinary precautions against an attack. His troops occupied a cantonment commanded on all sides by the forts and artillery of the Afghans; and the provisions were placed in an old fort at some distance from the cantonment, and still less defensible than that which the troops occupied. One or two Afghan chiefs saw

how seriously the safety of the troops was compromised by the blundering dispositions of the English commander, and determined to take advantage of them. They forged an order from the king for the destruction of our troops, by the common process of washing out the contents of a genuine paper with the exception of the seal, and substituting their own inventions. They then commenced an attack on the house of Sir Alexander Burnes, who was murdered, together with his brother, Lieutenant Burnes, and Lieutenant W. Broadfoot. General Elphinstone then brought the forces under his command into the cantonment, and recalled a portion of the force he had sent with General Sale to assist in forcing the passes, and which had been left to guard them. He had then under his command 4,500 fighting men, attended by 12,000 camp-followers, besides women and children. A vigorous and well-directed attack was made by the Affghans on the old fort in which the provisions were stored. The garrison was soon compelled to evacuate it, and to retire into the cantonment, leaving the provisions in the hands of the enemy. A supply was obtained from a neighbouring chuef; but this was soon cut off, and famine stared the little army in the face. Under such circumstances a Wellington or a Napier would probably have struck some sudden and decisive blow, but General Elphinstone and Sir William Macnaughten seem to have thought only of negotiating; they therefore welcomed an offer to treat made by the Affghan chiefs. But the terms proposed were so hard that the envoy refused to listen to them. The rapid diminution of the small stock of provisions compelled him to reopen the negotiations, and a convention was made, the principal conditions of which were, that the British should at once evacuate the whole of Affghanistan, and that the force under General Elphinstone should be protected and supplied with food by the Affghan chiefs during their journey to India. Sir William Macnaughten was entrapped into an interview with some of the Affghan leaders, and murdered. General Elphinstone, still attempting to negotiate, in spite of this proof of the treachery of the Affghans, found his position becoming every moment worse. At length on the 6th of January, 1842, he commenced a disastrous and humiliating retreat. Akbar Khan, who conducted the negotiations, and who, while professing to wish to carry out the stipulations he had made in favour of the British, was really directing the operations against them, proposed new and harder terms, and required several officers to be given up to him as hostages for their fulfilment. Nevertheless, the food

promised to the retreating force was not given, and the attacks on them were redoubled. Yet, notwithstanding their sufferings and privations, they gallantly fought their way through the Koord Cabul pass. Here Akbar Khan offered to protect the ladies if they should be intrusted to him; and, as there seemed to be no other chance of preserving their lives, it was thought better to take advantage of the offer; in accordance with which Lady Sale, Lady Macnaughten, and six other ladies, with their husbands, were placed under his protection. The sepoy, overcome by fatigue and benumbed by cold, were unable to go on, and were massacred without mercy and without resistance. The British troops, however, still held together, and fought their way forward. Of 16,500 who left Cabul, only 300 reached Jugdulluk after a march of thirty-five miles, in a miserable plight. General Elphinstone, having agreed to confer with Akbar Khan, in the hope of securing a peaceable retreat for the small remnant of his troops, was seized and made prisoner. The survivors, warned by a note from him of his fate, resumed their march the same night, through snow and intense cold. In the Jugdulluk Pass the attack was renewed; and as the little troop could no longer be kept together, the greater part of them were put to death. A few of the officers, having the advantage of being mounted, made their way to Gundermuck. Here they separated, in order to avoid observation, and took different roads to Jellalabad, but were murdered by the inhabitants of the villages through which they passed. One only escaped. Dr. Brydon, a medical man, faint and wounded, on the 13th of January reached Jellalabad, which was still occupied by the force under the command of General Sale.

While one part of the British army by which Afghanistan had been occupied* was thus being destroyed, the other portions of it were placed in a very perilous position, in the midst of a hostile population no longer restrained by the prestige of the British arms. The Indian government was not inactive. Lord Auckland, the governor-general, who was on the point of returning to England, lost not a moment in sending forward to Jellalabad all the troops he could collect. Reiterated orders were despatched to Sir Jasper Nichols, the commander-in-chief in India, to push forward to Peshawar as many troops as could be spared. But before Jellalabad could be reached, the Khyber Pass, a long and dangerous defile, must be traversed; and the Khybercees, instigated by the exhortations of Akbar Khan and their own hatred of the British, resolved to defend it with all their might. A first attempt

to penetrate it, made under the command of Brigadier Wild, was repulsed. General Pollock came up with largo reinforcements, and took the direction of the army, which now amounted to 8000 men. Knowing that everything depended on despatch, he endeavoured to purchase from the Khyberees permission to go through the pass without molestation, and the agreement was so nearly completed that a small instalment was actually paid to them; but finding that they were not to be depended on, and determined to lose no time, he pressed on, forcing his way through defiles which had hitherto presented an impassable barrier to every army that had attempted to traverse them, in the face of a resolute enemy. He was speedily followed by 4000 soldiers who had been left behind, and the pass was held for the British army by a body of Sikh troops.

On the 16th of April the army of General Pollock approached Jellalabad, and saw the English flag flying over the fortress. General Sale, who marched into the town on the 14th of November, found the fortifications in a very dilapidated condition, and far too extensive to be properly defended by the small force under his command. There were provisions for only a few days; and the whole population, both inside and outside the town, was savagely hostile. Here, however, he resolved to make a stand, and to be ready to afford shelter and co-operation to the army of General Elphinstone. But no messenger and no intelligence reached him from the army from which he had been detached. At length, on the 8th of January, five days before the arrival of Dr. Brydon, the general received a summons to evacuate Jellalabad in accordance with the terms of the convention which had been extorted from General Elphinstone and Sir W. Macnaughten, and which had been so treacherously violated. General Sale, though ignorant of what had occurred, refused to comply. It is said that a letter from his brave wife reached him, urging him to take this resolution, and declaring that she preferred death to his dishonour. His troops, though sadly disheartened, and exposed to terrible privations and hardships, laboured incessantly to raise and strengthen the defences of the town. But a tremendous earthquake shook down the parapets built up with much labour, injured several of the bastions, shook down all the guard-houses, demolished a third of the town, made a considerable breach in the rampart of a curtain in the Peshawur face, and reduced the Cabul gate to a shapeless mass of ruins. "It savours of romance," wrote the general, "but it is a sober fact that the city was thrown into alarm, within the space of a little more than one month, by the repetition of full

One hundred shocks of this terrific phenomenon of nature." The mischief thus done was assiduously repaired. Akbar Khan, accompanied by a largo force, and flushed with the success that had thus far crowned his enterprise, appeared before the town, and at once began to blockade it and compel the little garrison to fight for forage under every disadvantage. Profiting by his great superiority in cavalry, he kept them closely shut up within the walls, hoping that the want of supplies would speedily compel them to surrender. On the 7th of April, the British sallied out in force, attacked the camp of the besiegers, completely defeated them, and compelled them to retire towards Cabul. On the way Akbar Khan's barbarous followers gradually fell away from him, and returned to their homes; so that at length he was left almost with attendants.

General Pollock was in no haste to follow him. The enterprise before him required ample preparations to be made for it. It was not therefore till the 20th of August that he began to advance towards those fatal passes which General Sale had forced with so much difficulty, and in which the army of General Elphinstone had perished. The Ghulzies were again on the alert to resist the British invasion. Every height was crowned with large bodies of them, very advantageously posted, and protected by such defences as they had been able to erect. These obstacles to the march of our troops through the defiles were removed one after another in spite of a stubborn resistance. At length in the valley of Tezeen, a very narrow and difficult pass, the Affghans made their last stand, and our troops won a great and decisive victory. The Koord Cabul pass was traversed without resistance, and the British flag once more waved over the citadel of Cabul. The prisoners were recovered, but not without some difficulty; and now came the day of vengeance. The town of Istahiff, to which a great number of the Affghan chiefs had retired with their wives and children because it was supposed to be almost impregnable, was stormed by a force composed of British and Indian soldiers, who in their rage gave no quarter, putting every male in the place to death, and pillaging in a manner disgraceful to the character of the British arms. In Cabul, too, a signal and memorable example was made. The body of Sir W. Macnaughten, after his assassination, had been exposed to the insults of the populace in the great bazaar of Cabul. This building, the pride and chief ornament of the city, the emporium of that part of Asia, renowned at once for the antiquity of its associations and the majesty of its architecture, was completely destroyed, with the exception of those quarters whose inhabitants had adhered

to our cause. Having struck this blow, having signally punished the authors of the late disasters, having made themselves masters of Afghanistan, the Indian government wisely determined to withdraw our armies from a country they never ought to have entered, and to leave the inhabitants to settle their own form of government.

Another body of troops had been placed in a very critical position through the events we have narrated. General Nott, with a body of 10,000 men, was stationed near Cundahar. The Affghans, emboldened by the destruction of General Elphinstone's army, ventured to attack him, but he marched out to meet them with four regiments and a thousand horse, and completely defeated them. He was then summoned to fulfil the convention which General Elphinstone had signed, and to withdraw his troops from Afghanistan. This summons he peremptorily refused to obey. Meanwhile General England, who commanded in the part of India which was next to the position occupied by General Nott, vainly attempted to force his way through the Bolar Pass, which leads to Cundahar, to effect a junction with him. Having learned the true state of affairs at Cabul, General Nott resolved to co-operate with General Pollock, who was then making his way through the long series of defiles which intervened between Jollalabad and Cabul. He encountered and completely routed an Affghan army twice as numerous as that under his own command, well disciplined, and full of resolution. He then took Ghuznee, and destroyed its fortifications. In his advance from this place he drove another body of 12,000 Affghans from strong positions which they occupied. He encountered no further resistance, and effected a junction with General Pollock. The two armies marched together down those disastrous passes, which had been the scenes of so much slaughter; the sight of the unburied skeletons of their comrades maddened the soldiers, and they took a terrible vengeance on the unfortunate inhabitants, without attempting to discriminate between the innocent and the guilty.

The year 1843 commenced ominously. The distress was increasing, and the revenue diminishing. Some ascribed this state of things to the insurrection, some to the corn-laws, some to the Chartist agitation; but the real explanation was to be found in a series of deficient harvests, the calamitous effects of which would have been diminished by a free importation of corn.

The debate on the address was followed by another long debate on a motion brought forward by Lord Howick for the appointment of a committee to inquire into the causes of the prevailing distress,

The discussion turned chiefly on the question of the corn laws, and was remarkable for the frankness with which Sir R. Peel, Mr. Gladstone, and Sir James Graham admitted the general soundness of the principles of free trade, while pleading for the continuance of protection to agriculture, on the ground of the interests which had grown up under it. The only difference between them and the most advanced free-traders was as to the time when free trade principles should be carried out. They could not but feel that the necessity for a repeal or a modification of the taxes on food was daily and hourly growing more imperative—as, with a population increasing every year at the rate of 200,000, the burden of the corn-laws must become progressively more heavy, and they were gradually and cautiously paving the way for the repeal of duties which the free-traders wished to abolish without delay. At the commencement of the century England was perhaps capable of producing corn sufficient, or nearly sufficient, for all her inhabitants; but as her population increased, the home-supply fell more and more short of its requirements, and importation from other countries became more and more needful. All who thought on the subject felt that the impost could not be maintained much longer, especially in seasons of commercial and agricultural depression. The discussion showed that that House instinctively anticipated the result of such an inquiry as Lord Howick asked for; but the division proved that this was a result which the majority was not yet prepared to accept. The numbers were—

Against the motion	...	...	306
For it	.	...	191
Majority against the motion			115

An incident that occurred in this debate elicited at the time a very strong feeling, and helped to swell the majority by which the motion was refused. On the 21st of January, Mr. Drummond, the private secretary and confidential friend of Sir Robert Peel, was shot, as he was walking from Charing-cross towards Whitehall, by a man named M'Naughten, who appeared to be insane. There was no doubt that the assassin had mistaken Mr. Drummond for Sir Robert Peel. This event produced a very strong impression on the public mind, and was felt by no one more acutely than by Sir Robert himself. When, therefore, in the course of the debate on Lord Howick's motion, Mr. Cobden, repeating an expression he had already employed elsewhere,

declared that he held the prime minister as "individually responsible" for what might happen, Sir Robert Peel, who was suffering at the time from nervous depression, intensified by the feeling that he was overmatched in argument, passionately laid hold of the phrase, as if it had been designed to menace him with the fate that had befallen his unfortunate friend, and, amidst the loud cheers of his followers, indignantly stigmatized it as intended to hold him up as a mark for the pistol of the assassin. In vain did Mr. Cobden attempt to disavow a design so foreign to his character. The majority clamorously refused to listen to him. However, before the conclusion of the debate, he succeeded in giving an explanation in which he strongly, and, as Sir R. Peel subsequently admitted, truly, repudiated the interpretation that had been put upon his words.

A motion on the subject of education, brought forward by Lord Ashley, afforded the House of Commons an opportunity for a full discussion of that important question. Sir J. Graham gave the House an outline of the plan which the government intended to bring forward. It did not propose for the present, to do more than attempt to promote the compulsory education of two classes of children to whom it was thought that compulsion might properly be applied in this matter—the children of paupers, and the children who were employed in factories. It was intended that district schools, placed under the superintendence of the clergy, should be established in the metropolis and the larger towns of the kingdom for the children of paupers and of such other persons as might wish to send their children to them, provision being made for the religious instruction of children of dissenting parents by ministers of their own persuasion. The buildings were to be erected by a rate not exceeding one-fifth the annual amount of the poor-rate for the last three years. The legislation for the education of factory children had hitherto proved ineffectual. It was now proposed that children between the ages of eight and thirteen should not be allowed to be employed in factories for more than six and a half hours a day, the whole work to be done either in the forenoon or the afternoon, nor without having certificates of attendance during the other half of the day at some school in connection with the National Society or the British and Foreign Society, or, in the case of Roman Catholics, at some Roman Catholic school. It was also intended that the authorised version of the Scriptures, and some portion of the liturgy, should be used in those schools which were to be placed under the care of the clergy.

When we consider the obstacles with which that government had to contend from its own extreme supporters, and the difficulty with which a measure of national education was at length, in the year 1870, forced through the two branches of the legislature, it must be admitted that such a proposal in the year 1843, avowedly as a first step towards a more extended plan, was a bold and praiseworthy attempt. The reception which this scheme met with in the House of Commons was very encouraging. Lord J. Russell, with a warmth that did him great honour, expressed his approval of the plan; though he very properly objected to its being limited to the manufacturing districts, when, as he truly remarked, the agricultural districts were in this respect certainly not better off than the towns. He reserved his opinion with regard to the details of the measure, but added, with characteristic frankness, that if it should be found to answer to the view that Sir J. Graham had given of it, it would not only be folly but wickedness to oppose it. Several other members also spoke approvingly of the proposed measure. It was true that Sir R. Inglis, always zealous for what he conceived to be the interests of the church; Mr Hawes, no less zealous for the dissenters; and Mr. O'Brien, who expressed the sentiments of a large number of his Roman Catholic co-religionists—objected to parts of the scheme which trenchd on their opinions; but these objections were made in a manner so temperate as scarcely to interrupt the general desire that seemed to be felt to settle this important question. The address proposed by Lord Ashley was accepted, and on the 8th of March a favourable answer to it was delivered at the bar of the House by the Earl of Jermyn. On the same evening the Factory Bill, containing the educational provisions already mentioned, was brought in and explained to the House by Sir J. Graham. The measure was readily accepted by those members who were supposed to represent the church; but vehemently condemned and strenuously opposed by the dissenters, who complained that it was not based on principles of fair and equal justice. The consequence was that though the government carried the second reading by a considerable majority, they abandoned the educational clauses.

This year was marked by an amount of distress which, though it was cast into the shade by that which prevailed in some subsequent years, was sufficiently severe to demand the serious consideration of the legislature, and the best endeavours of all its members to devise some remedy for it. As the corn-laws, which were jealously upheld by the great majority of both Houses,

prevented food from coming freely to the people, Mr. Buller suggested that the people should be taken to the food. This he proposed to effect by promoting emigration on a large scale to our colonies, where the labour of those who could find no employment at home was greatly needed and would be largely recompensed. Mr. Villiers, speaking as the representative of the free-traders, proposed to allow food to be brought more freely to the people by the entire and immediate repeal of all duties on the necessities of life. But the first real inroad made on the policy of agricultural protection, the first opening for the inlet of foreign corn, was afforded by Lord Stanley himself, who, in his capacity of colonial minister, brought in a bill to carry out an arrangement that had been entered into with the Canadian government for the admission of corn and wheaten meal at diminished fixed duties. It was strongly opposed by a combination of free-traders, who thought it did not go far enough, and of ultra-protectionists, who feared—and as the event proved, not without reason—that it would open the door to farther relaxations of protection, but it passed through both Houses by considerable majorities.

In the course of this year the chronic disorders of Ireland broke out into a paroxysm of unusual violence, producing murders, agrarian outrages, monster meetings, a general and vehement revival of the agitation for the repeal of the Union, and a sudden rise of the repeal rent from 500*l.* to 3000*l.* a week. These things compelled the ministry to have recourse to measures of coercion, which unfortunately were neither accompanied nor followed by measures calculated to remove the political maladies of which the crimes and violences that prevailed were the natural outcome. Nor, indeed, were ministers either able or willing to deal with those maladies in an effectual manner; for they were doubly and trebly pledged to the upholding of that which lay at the root of the evils and discontents of that unfortunate country—the existence of a richly endowed established church, entirely at variance with the religious belief of the vast majority of the Irish people, officered by ministers, many of whom were in the constant habit of denouncing the religion of the great majority of their fellow-countrymen as an idolatrous and anti-Christian superstition, and regarded by the Irish Catholics as a badge of conquest.

In the course of this year the old contest about church-rates entered on a new phase. The parishioners of Braintree, in Essex, had for some time past refused, by a considerable majority, to make a rate for the repair of their church, which was almost in

ruins. The churchwardens were advised that it was their duty to lay a rate, and that the law would support them in collecting it. The matter was brought before the Court of Queen's Bench, and Lord Denman gave judgment against the legality of a rate so laid. From this decision an appeal was made to the judges sitting in Exchequer, who confirmed the decision of Lord Denman; but in delivering the judgment of the court, Lord Chief Justice Tindal remarked, that there was a wide and substantial difference between a rate laid by the churchwardens alone after the meeting had taken place, and one laid at the meeting with the concurrence of the minority. The churchwardens acted on this hint; another meeting was called, at which it was proposed that a rate of two shillings in the pound should be laid; and as the majority passed a resolution tantamount to the rejection of the rate, the churchwardens proceeded, with the concurrence of a minority of the ratepayers, to lay the rate. Thus Braintree became the field on which the church-rate battle for the whole kingdom was to be fought. Large contributions were raised both by the opponents and the supporters of church-rates throughout the kingdom. The case was carried by appeal before the Court of Arches; and the judge of that Court, Sir H. J. Fust, gave judgment in favour of the validity of the rate. In spite, however, of this decision the rate continued to be refused in a great number of large and populous parishes, but it gave a new direction to the anti-church-rate agitation. Hitherto it had been carried on at meetings of parish-vestries throughout the kingdom; henceforth it was conducted with a more distinct aim at the entire abolition of the impost by Act of Parliament. In the manufacturing districts, and in many other parts of the kingdom, it had almost ceased to be levied, owing to the stubbornness with which it was resisted.

The *Tracts for the Times* had leavened to a considerable extent the minds of the young men who were educated at Oxford, and especially of those who were designed for the clerical profession. But they had roused feelings of jealousy and alarm, on account of the progress that the views they advocated were making, not only in Oxford but throughout the kingdom, and not only among the clergy and students of divinity but also among the laity. This feeling of hostility was strongly brought out by the publication of Tract No. 80, the title of which was on "Reserve in communicating Religious Knowledge." The tract was written with great ability, and contained many plain but neglected truths, expressed in beautiful and sometimes highly poetical language. It was designed

to inculcate the lesson that great care should be used in the conveyance of religious teaching, and to contend against the practice of throwing down the highest mysteries of Christianity before the careless and indifferent. If the writer had shown as much good sense in the choice of a title as he displayed ability in the treatment of his subject—had he, for instance, employed the word *caution* instead of *reserve*—it is likely that much of the prejudice and obloquy brought by him on the cause he advocated would have been avoided. But the truth was that the Tractarians were too firm and sincere in their convictions, had too strong a faith in the system they upheld, to listen to the dictates of prudence. Believing what they taught to be the truth, they scorned all management, and delighted in putting forward their views in the form most calculated to rouse and shock their opponents, thinking that the more they were discussed and decried, the more rapid and complete would their triumph be. Accordingly, the use of the unfortunate word “reserve” revived the ecclesiastical panic which had well-nigh subsided. Men who had never read a line of the Tracts jumped at the conclusion, that the object at which the writer aimed was to keep back the most unpopular doctrines of Romanism till the way had been prepared for them by the teachings of the Tractarian party. This feeling was greatly increased when the 90th Tract appeared, the writer of which endeavoured to show that a person might honestly subscribe all the articles and formularies of the church of England, and yet hold almost all the doctrines of the Romish church. The feeling which the publication of these arguments excited was increased when it was understood that the tract was written for the purpose of retaining in the English communion many who, under the teaching of the Tracts, had embraced the doctrines of the Roman church, and were preparing to join it. Now that the outburst of party feeling to which the appearance of this tract gave rise has almost entirely subsided, no one will accuse its author, Dr. Newman, of deliberate disingenuousness, but it cannot be denied that he laboured to persuade his followers that they might honestly sign the articles while holding doctrines which the framers of these articles intended to condemn. The general feeling was well expressed by the following resolution, adopted in reference to it at a meeting of the vice-chancellor, heads of houses, and proctors of the University of Oxford, held on the 15th of March, 1841, about six weeks after the appearance of the obnoxious tract:—

“Resolved, that modes of interpretation such as are suggested in

the same tract, evading rather than explaining the sense of the thirty-nine articles, and reconciling subscription to them with the adoption of errors which they were designed to counteract, defeat the object and are inconsistent with the due observance of the above-mentioned statutes," i.e. the statutes requiring every student of the university to be instructed in and subscribe the thirty-nine articles. This condemnation was followed by one to which its authors acknowledged that more deference was due. The Bishop of Oxford desired that the publication of the Tracts should be discontinued, and his request was at once complied with. The Tractarian party received in 1843 another blow in the suspension of Dr. Pusey, the professor of Hebrew. On the fourth Sunday after Easter that divine preached before the university in the cathedral church; the subject of his sermon was "The holy eucharist a comfort to the penitent." This discourse was soon after published, and attracted much attention by the bold and distinct assertion of doctrines with regard to the eucharist, which, if not absolutely identical with those of the church of Rome, were hardly distinguishable from them. In consequence of the complaints made to him, the vice-chancellor, acting in accordance with the statutes of the university, appointed five doctors of divinity to examine the sermon and report to him on it. Dr. Pusey strongly and justly complained that the vice-chancellor, whose theological views were diametrically opposed to his own, had refused to adopt an alternative allowed him by the statutes, which would have given the accused party an opportunity of defending himself, and that no definite proposition had been extracted from the sermon, which, in the opinion of the judges, was at variance with the teaching of the church of England on the subject. However, the five doctors condemned the sermon; and the vice-chancellor sentenced Dr. Pusey to be suspended for two years from preaching before the university.

Amidst all these adverse circumstances the movement was still carried forward with no abatement of zeal, with little diminution of success, and with greater intemperance than ever. The miracles of the Middle Ages were narrated and defended; the doctrine of transubstantiation was elaborately justified by numerous quotations from ancient fathers and Anglican divines; the church of Rome and the Greek church, which in the earlier numbers of the *Tracts for the Times* had been acrimoniously condemned as full of corruptions, were now referred to with respect and admiration, while the Anglican church was mentioned in cold and con-

temptuous terms. These significant indications called forth the warm applauses of Roman Catholic periodicals, while they excited the serious alarm of many who had hitherto sympathised with or aided the Tractarian party. Mr. Palmer and Dr. Hook in particular strongly protested against these later developments, while they still adhered to the principles that had been promulgated in the earlier Tracts. The outcry against the extreme Tractarians waxed louder and louder; many of them joined the church of Rome, and at length were followed by Mr. Newman himself, after the publication of his celebrated work on the development of religious doctrine, in which he recanted many of the opinions he had previously advanced, and justified the step he had determined to take in abandoning the church of his youth for that which he had once regarded as the congregation of Antichrist and the Mother of Harlots. But notwithstanding the heavy blows and serious discouragements it had received, notwithstanding the apostacy of many of its members; notwithstanding the vehemence with which it was assailed by Tories, Conservatives, and Liberals; in spite of episcopal censures and academic protests,—the party still survived, and, under the leadership of Dr. Pusey, continued to preach and promulgate principles denounced by many of those who had originated the movement.

While the real leader of the party deserted his friends in the manner most calculated to damage the movement of which he had been the head and soul, its ablest and most uncompromising antagonist was removed by the hand of death,—Dr. Arnold, head master of Rugby, who had done more to elevate the character of our public schools than any other man who had ever lived—a really great and good man—a vehement political and religious liberal; the violence of whose partizanship prevented him from doing justice to the motives and the characters of men like Pusey, Newman, and Keble. He may be regarded as the founder of the Broad Church party, not only because he strenuously urged the views it holds, but also because by his letters, his publications, his conversation, and his influence on the minds of his pupils, he trained most of those who now are, or who formerly were, promulgators of the opinions which that party upholds.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SLIDING SCALE.

THE year 1844 opened under the happiest auspices. England was at peace with all the world. A war commenced last year against Scinde had ended in the signal triumph of our troops and the annexation of that province to our Indian possessions. The financial measures of the government had changed a growing deficiency into an increasing surplus. Great improvements had manifested themselves in many branches of trade and manufacture. The chartist and anti-corn-law agitations, so formidable and threatening during the distresses of the last few years, were now languishing. Ireland alone presented an exception to the general contentment, and still continued to be, as she had been all along, Sir Robert Peel's chief difficulty. Under these circumstances, the Queen's speech consisted chiefly of congratulations on the happy state of the country, and of the announcement that a commission had been appointed to inquire into the law and practice with regard to the occupation of land in Ireland; indicating an intention on the part of the government to bring before parliament farther measures for the pacification of that country. Amendments on the address moved by Mr. Sharman Crawford and Mr. Hume, as well as a motion made by the former for stopping the supplies till grievances had been redressed, were rejected by very large majorities. Mr. Disraeli, professing to deliver opinions which were not his own only but those of a small but talented school of members, known sometimes as "Young England," and sometimes as "Old Tories," suggested as the true remedy for the Irish difficulty "a strong executive, a just administration, and ecclesiastical equality."

In this session the factory question occupied a large share of the attention of parliament. Lord Ashley earnestly contended for a

limitation of the time of labour for women and children to ten hours, and twice obtained a majority in spite of the opposition of the government. Ministers, on the other hand, insisted on twelve hours, and declared themselves determined to stake their existence as an administration on that point. The result was, that the clauses of the measure on which ministers had been in a minority were amended to meet their views; and the measure thus altered was carried through both Houses by considerable majorities. It changed the age of children admitted to work in factories from nine to eight, diminished the working hours of children under thirteen years of age to six and a half hours, extended the time during which they were to be under daily instruction in schools from two to two-and-a-half hours in winter, and three hours in summer; continued the limitation of the labour of persons between thirteen and eighteen to twelve hours a day, and applied the same limitation to the labour of women; required the production of a certificate of baptism, if demanded, to prove that the child was really of the age required by the law, lowered the amount or the fines imposed for the violation of the law, but inflicted them for each person improperly worked, instead of for each offence, which might include several persons; it enacted that machinery should be guarded, to prevent accidents.

The public confidence in the government showed itself in various ways; amongst others, in a very considerable rise of the public securities. The $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. Consols were now at 102 $\frac{1}{2}$. This naturally suggested the expediency and propriety of making a better bargain with the public creditors, and of relieving the nation of some portion of that load of debt which pressed so heavily on it. Accordingly, on the 8th of March, Mr. Goulburn, the chancellor of the exchequer, announced that he intended to deal with public stocks amounting to the vast sum of 250,000,000*l.*, bearing $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. interest. He proposed that the amount of this interest should be reduced to $3\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. until the year 1894, and that it should then go under a farther reduction to 3 per cent., after which it was to continue unchanged. A certain time was to be allowed to the holders of these stocks, to decide whether they would accept the offer made by the government, or be paid off. It was calculated that the adoption of this scheme would save the nation the annual sum of 625,000*l.* from 1844 to 1894, and that after that period the annual saving would amount to 1,250,000*l.* This plan met with a most frank and favourable reception from all parties and the bill in which it was embodied went rapidly

through all its stages in both Houses, without a single dissentient voice.

Seldom had it been the good fortune of a chancellor of the exchequer to lay before the House of Commons so favourable a representation of improvement, not only in the amount of the revenue, but also in the trade and prosperity of the country. The total expenditure of the year was estimated at 48,603,171*l.*, the income at 51,790,000*l.*; leaving an apparent surplus of 3,146,000*l.*, or, making a deduction for a portion of the debt to be discharged the next year, 2,376,000*l.* The source of the surplus was mainly the income tax, and the House would have to consider the next year whether it should be prolonged, as was originally proposed, for two years beyond the first three; for if other taxes were now to be hastily reduced, before the operation of the tariff could be thoroughly known, the House might be left next year without an option as to the continuation of the income tax. There were, however, some articles upon which remission might be afforded with a fair prospect of making up revenue by increased consumption, and with a probability of increasing the consumption of other articles. The articles selected for such remission were glass, vinegar, currants, coffee, marine assurance, and wool, on the aggregate of which the amount of duty remitted would be 387,000*l.* a year. With regard to the sugar duties, as the Brazilian treaty would expire in November, it was proposed to recommend that England should admit, at a differential duty of 10*per cent.*, the sugar of those states which did not cultivate that commodity by slave labour. To the greater part of this budget no serious opposition or even objection was made. The chief struggle was over the sugar duties, the government contending that some advantage ought to be given to the sugar produced by our West Indian colonies, which were now, with great difficulty and danger, passing through a period of transition from slave labour to free labour. On the other hand, the Opposition, led by Lord John Russell, insisted that the attempt to protect free-grown against slave-grown sugar was utterly absurd. They maintained that we had nothing to do with the social institutions of the nations that were willing to trade with us; that the principle of determining the amount of the duties we thought fit to impose on the products of foreign countries, by our approval or disapproval of slavery, was one which would lead us, if we were consistent, to mark in the same way our disapproval of other institutions of the nations with which we traded, many of which were quite as objectionable as the institution of slavery; and that the

question we ought to consider with reference to the duty on sugar was, how we could best adapt it to increase the revenue of the country, and cheapen the article on which the duty was imposed. The resolutions proposed by Mr. Goulburn were carried by a majority of sixty-nine, and the bill founded on them was introduced and read a first and second time without discussion. It was committed on the 14th of June. In committee it encountered a formidable opposition from the ultra-protectionists, who contended that ministers ought to give a larger amount of protection to our own colonies. The leader of this opposition, and the mover of the resolution which embodied its views, was Mr. P. Miles. He dwelt on the ruin and desolation that were overspreading our West Indian colonies, and loudly accused ministers of bringing in a measure which afforded no adequate protection to the planters, and had not even the merit of finally settling the question with which it dealt. He insisted that the interests of the British and the West Indian farmer were identical, the only difference between them being, that the one produced wheat and the other sugar; and he predicted, that if the protection which was given to one description of agriculture should be withdrawn, that which was afforded to the other would speedily be abandoned. Mr. Baillie, who seconded the motion, maintained that the ministerial plan would encourage the foreign slave-trade, and yet afford only a very partial advantage to the British people. Common sense, he urged, dictated that we should raise our revenue from foreign sugar rather than from that which was produced by our own colonies. This resolution was supported by Lord J. Russell and several members and followers of the late administration, and was carried against ministers by a majority of twenty; but after they had distinctly intimated, that if the vote was not reversed, they should regard it as a vote of want of confidence, and act accordingly, another division was taken, and the ministerial plan was sustained by a majority of twenty-two.

The time had now arrived when parliament was required to deliberate on the renewal of the Bank Charter, involving a reconsideration of the whole banking system of England. It had been provided, by the act passed in 1833, that the government might give notice to the Bank before August, 1844, that parliament intended to deal again with the question of the Bank Charter. The government was thus called on to decide, in the course of this session, whether it would take advantage of this provision of the last Bank Charter Act. They resolved to do so—and the high financial reputation enjoyed by Sir R. Peel caused the ministerial

plan to be anticipated with confidence, strengthened by the fact that the present minister enjoyed the advantage of considering the elaborate report of the committee which had been appointed in 1833 to inquire into the whole banking question. The measure was submitted to the House of Commons on the 6th of May by the prime minister himself, who was sustained by large majorities in upholding its provisions against all opposition. He agreed to admit a few modifications of no great importance, pressed on him by high banking authorities, and the bill, thus slightly amended, went through the House of Commons. In the House of Lords it passed through the committee without a single division.

Another subject which occupied a considerable share of the attention of parliament during the session, was the consideration of the ownership of certain chapels, which had originally been founded by Trinitarian nonconformists, but had gradually passed into the hands of Unitarians. Many of these had been built by a Lady Hewley, and she had directed that they should be held by "godly preachers of Christ's holy gospel," and other like cases had occurred with regard to chapels founded by persons who undoubtedly were Trinitarians, but had used terms equally vague in stating the doctrines they wished to be taught in them. Actions had in some cases been brought, in order to transfer these chapels to ministers whose opinions on the nature of the Godhead were more in accordance with those of their founders. It was indeed admitted that they had failed to specify their intentions with regard to the doctrines they intended to have taught; but that failure was accounted for by scruples which they were known to have entertained about creeds as being mere human inventions, which had prevented them from giving any distinct statement of the doctrines they wished to have taught, which could not be done without enunciating a creed. Thus they had been led to express their intentions in terms the letter of which did not absolutely prohibit the introduction of doctrines which they abhorred, and which they certainly would have precluded if they could have foreseen that any attempt would ever be made to introduce them. On the other hand, it was argued, that the vagueness with which the doctrines to be taught in these chapels were described by their founders was purposely adopted, in order to evade the law, which, at the time of their foundation, did not extend to Unitarians the toleration it afforded to every other denomination of nonconformists, and thereby prevented the erection of chapels in which the teaching

of Unitarianism was avowed. It was farther argued, that they had for a long course of years been in the hands of the Unitarians, who, in the expectation that they would continue to retain them, had expended considerable sums on their enlargement and improvement, and in making additions to the burial-grounds that in some instances were attached to them. The question had been tried in the case of chapels founded by Lady Hewley. They were built for the Calvinistic Methodists, and therefore there could be no doubt that they were intended by the founder to be places in which Trinitarian doctrines should be taught; but they had come into the hands of Unitarians, who, after having for many years held undisturbed possession of them, were ejected. It was feared that this decision would give rise to much litigation, and would probably cause the Unitarians to be deprived of many other chapels. The government therefore adopted a course which did them great honour. They were all decided Trinitarians, their followers, almost without exception, were zealous on the same side. They knew that by interfering with the regular course of the law in this matter, in order to do justice to a sect everywhere spoken against, they would give offence to large numbers of their supporters. But they felt that a great wrong would be done if they allowed the law to take its course. They therefore framed a bill securing to Unitarians the possession of chapels of which they had held the unquestioned possession for a period of more than twenty years. The measure was brought into the House of Lords by Lord Lyndhurst. It was strenuously opposed in the Upper House by the Bishop of London, and in the House of Commons by Sir R. Inglis, Mr. Plumptree, and the party with which they usually acted. Great efforts were made to agitate the country against the measure, not only by churchmen, but also by many Protestant dissenters. The ministers, warmly supported in the course they had determined to take by Lord J. Russell and the majority of the Whig party, carried their measure through its various stages, preventing much vexatious litigation and shameful injustice, though in doing so they widened still farther the breach which already separated them from the more extreme section of their followers, and was soon destined to change hesitating and suspicious support into open and uncompromising opposition.

Mr. Gladstone introduced a bill for the regulation of railways, founded on the report of a committee that had been appointed to inquire into the subject. The accommodation which had been provided for the working classes by the railway companies had been of

a very inferior description. Third-class passengers were conveyed in carriages without seats and without covering, in which they stood crowded together like cattle. Most of the trains to which these carriages were attached travelled very slowly, stopped at every station, were shunted to make way for the quicker trains, and ran over distances much shorter than those now traversed by third-class trains. Persons who travelled by them were subject to frequent delays, and often needlessly compelled to find themselves lodgings for the night. Mr. Gladstone's bill dealt with these and other evils. The measure was strongly opposed at its first introduction by the representatives of the railway interest in the House of Commons; but, after some concessions had been made to them, it was carried through both Houses without much farther opposition.

Another subject that occupied the attention of the legislature was the state of the turnpike-laws in the principality of Wales. New toll-bars were being continually erected, and the tolls were greatly and, as the Welsh generally believed, illegally raised. These exactions roused in the minds of that proverbially fiery people some sparks of that spirit which Edward I. found it so difficult to quell. Accustomed to regard every question from a religious point of view, and to express their thoughts and feelings in Scriptural phrasology, they applied to the turnpike-gates the promise which the Bible records to have been given to the descendants of the wife of Isaac, that they should possess the *gate* of their enemies, and thus they were led to connect their hostility to the turnpikes with the name of Rebecca. Finding that peaceful agitation was of no avail, they resolved to remove the obnoxious turnpikes by force; and carried out their intentions in a manner suggested by the Scriptural notions they had adopted. A number of them dressed themselves in women's clothing; the leader of the party was known by the name of Rebecca, and those who executed his orders were called daughters of Rebecca. They began their operations in 1839, when a party of them assembled, and levelled to the ground in open day a turnpike-gate and the hut of the toll-keeper. The gate was reinstated, and no farther proceedings of the kind took place till the beginning of the year 1843, when more serious and systematic attacks were made on the turnpike-gates. They were carried out in the night. The toll-keeper was warned off; he was allowed a short time to convey away his furniture and effects; and then the gate-posts were sawn across close to the ground, and the gate and toll-house destroyed. This example was followed in almost every county of South Wales except that of Brecknock. Altogether about

150 gates or toll-bars were destroyed. The mischief did not stop here. The rioters, emboldened by success and impunity, began to turn their attention to other real or imaginary grievances, which they thought might be redressed in the same manner; and soon that usually tranquil district was in so disturbed a condition that the government found it necessary to adopt vigorous measures. The upper classes, who had witnessed without much concern or disapproval the destruction of the turnpikes, became seriously alarmed at the course that things were now taking. Threatening letters were sent to magistrates, clergymen, and others who attempted to put a stop to the proceedings of the Rebeccaites. Shots were fired into many houses; the town of Carmarthen was tumultuously attacked by large bodies of rioters, who held possession of it for several hours, and were only dislodged by a troop of light dragoons, who were compelled to use their swords in order to overcome the resistance offered to them. The government therefore sent down a considerable military force, as well as a large body of London police. They also appointed a special commission for the trial of persons accused of complicity with these disturbances, and who, even when captured, and proved by the clearest evidence to have been guilty, were almost sure to escape punishment in consequence of the sympathy with which their proceedings were regarded throughout the Principality. The government felt that the Rebecca riots had their origin in real grievances, and determined to remove the abuses of which the inhabitants had just reason to complain. A commission was appointed to inquire into the causes from which the disturbances had arisen, and, in conformity with their recommendations, a bill was framed by the government remodelling the whole system of turnpike trusts in Wales, which became law with little remark or opposition, and the disturbed districts then resumed their habitual tranquillity.

The business of the session of 1844 had been completed in time to have allowed the prorogation of parliament on the 9th of August, but a weighty matter of a very exceptional character remained to be determined. Ireland was still Sir R. Peel's chief difficulty. He was deeply and sincerely anxious to tranquilize it. He had hoped that the Catholic Emancipation Act, which he had made such sacrifices to carry, would have been the harbinger of peace and prosperity to that unhappy and distracted country: but measure after measure had been since passed for its pacification, concession after concession had been made, but all had been in vain. In 1843 a new agitation for the repeal of the union between

the two countries had been set on foot by Mr. O'Connell, and had assumed very alarming dimensions. The demands of the Irish agitator were at bottom not unreasonable. What he required was the substitution of imperial legislation for merely local legislation. He insisted that if the union continued to exist, it should be an identification of the two islands of Great Britain and Ireland; that both should have the same rights, the same privileges, the same immunities; that the electoral franchise should be the same, the organization of the municipal corporations alike—in fact, that there should be one law throughout the British Islands. If this were conceded, he was willing to accept the legislative union between the two countries; if this were denied he was determined to go on agitating for its repeal. Accordingly he did agitate most vigorously. The people were diligently drilled, monster meetings were held, which were formidable, not only on account of the multitudes by which they were attended, but on account of the semi-military organisation which was exhibited, and the spirit of bitter hostility to England and England's government that was displayed. On the 15th of August, 1843, one of these assemblages was held at Tara, the place at which the old kings of Ireland had been elected, and at which in the great Irish rebellion the insurgents had suffered a signal defeat. At this meeting O'Connell, encouraged by the vast numbers and the frantic applause of those by whom he was surrounded, rashly promised that within a year from that time a parliament should be sitting in College Green at Dublin; a prediction which evidently could only be accomplished by a general and successful rising against the English government. Another meeting was convoked for the 8th of October, at Clontarf, near Dublin, celebrated for a victory gained there by the Irish over their invaders. On the 7th of October a proclamation appeared on the walls of Dublin prohibiting the Clontarf meeting, and threatening with punishment all who disobeyed the prohibition. O'Connell at once countermanded it, though not without difficulty, on account of the extreme shortness of the notice given. The agitator himself, his son John, and his principal adherents, were prosecuted for a conspiracy to raise and excite disaffection among her majesty's subjects, and for exciting them to hatred and contempt of the government and constitution of the realm as by law established, etc. After many delays and much legal skirmishing, the prisoners were produced before the Court of Queen's Bench and a jury in Dublin on the 15th of January. But even then every obstacle that legal ingenuity could devise was interposed, and new delays caused by lengthened discussions raised on them.

It was an unfortunate, though perhaps an unavoidable, circumstance, that those who tried the prisoners, both judges and jurymen, were all Protestants. The advocates of the crown, knowing that almost every Roman Catholic was sure also to be favourable to the cause of repeal, and would probably give a verdict in favour of the prisoners, however strong the evidence and the law might be against them, felt it to be their duty to strike off the name of every Roman Catholic that appeared on the panel. But though this proceeding probably promoted the cause of substantial justice, it deprived the finding of the jury of that moral weight which attaches to a verdict that is felt to have been fairly obtained. The trial extended over twenty-four days. In the course of it the Irish attorney-general so far lost his temper, and forgot what he owed to his office, as to challenge one of the opposing counsel to a duel, and to persist in his challenge in spite of all the remonstrances that were offered to him, until the matter had become a public scandal. O'Connell spoke at great length in his own defence; but the judges charged against him and his fellow-prisoners, and the jury, after long deliberation, returned a verdict of guilty against all the prisoners on some counts of the indictment, while they acquitted them on others. O'Connell was condemned to be imprisoned for twelve calendar months, and fined the sum of 2,000*l*. The other prisoners received sentences proportioned to the degree of their guilt, with the exception of the Rev. Thomas Tierney, a Roman Catholic priest, in whose case the crown lawyers did not press for judgment. An appeal was made to the House of Lords, resting chiefly on technical grounds; but before it could be heard the period had arrived, when, under ordinary circumstances, the session would have closed. As, however, the judges, whose opinions it was thought necessary to take on some points of law raised in the appeal, were engaged in the summer circuits, parliament, instead of being prorogued, was only adjourned—the House of Lords to the 2nd of September, when the appeal would be heard, and the House of Commons to the 5th of that month, by which time it was expected that the decision would be given. After the hearing of counsel, the judges gave their opinions on the points submitted to them. They all thought that the indictment contained both good and bad matter. Lord Chief-Justice Tindal and six other judges very confidently maintained that the good matter did away with the bad, and that the judgment of the Court below should be affirmed. On the other hand, Baron Parke and Judge Coltman gave a somewhat hesitating opinion that the bad

matter in the indictment destroyed the good, and that the judgment ought to be reversed.

Then came the turn of the peers to deliver their decision. The usual practice in such cases is for the law lords only who have been present at the whole of the hearing to speak and vote. But on this occasion a large number of lay lords attended, who had not been present throughout the proceedings. The lord chancellor (Lord Lyndhurst) gave his judgment at length in accordance with the opinion which had been given by the majority of the judges, and concluded by moving that the judgment of the court below should be affirmed. Lord Brougham followed him, and came to a similar conclusion. Lord Denman, Lord Cottenham, and Lord Campbell delivered their opinions on the opposite side, and the last-mentioned lord moved that the judgment of the court below should be reversed. The majority of the lay lords present, who were warm supporters of the government, considered that the judgment of the court below was about to be reversed, and a damaging blow inflicted not on the present administration only, but on the authority of the English government in Ireland, by three strong Whig partisans, in the teeth of the distinctly expressed opinion of a large majority of the judges, and of two such high authorities as Lords Lyndhurst and Brougham. When, therefore, the question was put by the lord chancellor, several of them called out, "Aye." The chancellor was embarrassed, and seemed at a loss to determine what course he ought to take. Lord Brougham lamented the decision to which the majority of the law lords had come, declaring that it would "go out without authority, and come back without respect;" but deprecated the interference of the lay lords. Lord Campbell observed that the constitution knew no distinction between law lords and lay lords; all had a right to vote; but it was improper that those who had not been present throughout the whole hearing should exercise that right. In spite of these dissuasions the Earl of Effingham announced that he was determined to vote; but as the lord chancellor and other peers remonstrated against this course, the lay peers retired from the House, leaving the five law lords to decide the question before them, without extraneous interference; and so the judgment was reversed. O'Connell, who had been already detained some weeks, was set at liberty. The news of this decision was received in Ireland with ecstatic delight. O'Connell was conducted to his house in Merrion-square, Dublin, by an innumerable multitude, amidst the most triumphant demonstrations of enthusiasm and affection, and ad-

dressed them in his usual style. Similar demonstrations were made in all parts of Ireland. But O'Connell was now nearly at the end of his career. He was not far from seventy years of age, and the fatigues and excitements he had undergone began to tell on his iron constitution. Rivals, too, were now springing up, who seemed likely to deprive him of that popular adoration in which he so greatly rejoiced. His condemnation and imprisonment had taught him a lesson of caution, and prevented him from indulging in those denunciations of the English authority with which he had been accustomed to delight his hearers. Henceforth he felt that he had to do with a government that was not to be trifled with, and he spoke and acted accordingly.

At the conclusion of this protracted session, the English government was able to announce that war between France and England, which at one time seemed to be imminent, had been avoided, and that the good understanding which had so long existed between the two Governments was maintained. It was therefore a bold and well-timed act on the part of the French king to choose this period as the one for returning a visit he had received from our Queen and Prince Albert. The satisfactory state of our relations with another great European power, with which it was of the utmost importance that this country should maintain a friendly intercourse, was attested by a visit paid to this country by the Emperor of Russia. These visits were not mere interchanges of personal civilities between crowned heads, but also a means of drawing closer the ties of amity between this country and the great nations over which these potentates reigned. They were also the means of bringing together some of the chief statesmen of Russia, France, and England, enabling them to become better acquainted with one another's views and characters, and to discuss questions which had arisen, or were likely to arise, between their respective countries much more fully in free and friendly conversation than in communications carried on through diplomatic agents.

The parliamentary session of 1845 began under peculiarly favourable auspices. The harvest of the preceding year had been unusually abundant; and trade and commerce had thoroughly revived from their long-continued depression. The fiscal measures of the government had answered, and more than answered, the anticipations of their framers. The income tax was endured with patience when the advantages of the remission of taxation that it had enabled ministers to make began to be felt, and the burden was

the more choerfully borne because it was hoped that in no long time it would be removed.

During the recess the government had lost one of its ablest members. Mr. Gladstone, as president of the board of trade, had taken as large a share as the prime minister himself in the financial reforms which had so greatly increased the reputation of the present administration, and had displayed no less tact and eloquence in explaining and defending than skill and diligence in preparing them. Parliament and the country naturally expected to know the reasons which had caused him to secede from the cabinet. In the course of the debate on the address, Lord John Russell made some remarks on his resignation, which drew from him an explanation of the cause of his withdrawal from the ministry. Some years before this time he had published a volume on the relations between the church and the state. In this work he had advanced opinions at variance with the course which the government had determined to take in reference to the endowment of Maynooth College. It was true that he had abandoned those opinions, and was prepared to support the bill which the government intended to bring forward; but he feared that if in office he should advocate a measure that he had condemned in a work prepared with much care and reflection, it might be supposed that his change of opinion was dictated by interested motives; he therefore retired from the ministry. At the same time, he expressed great regret at having to withdraw, and respect for the colleagues from whom he had felt obliged to separate himself. This explanation caused a strong feeling of regret that a scrupulousness, generally regarded as over-sensitive, should deprive the government and the country of the services of an able and upright minister. The statement made by Mr. Gladstone called up Sir Robert Peel, who announced that he intended to propose to the House "a liberal increase of the vote for the college of Maynooth," and that he did "not propose to accompany that increased vote by any regulation with respect to the doctrine, discipline, and management of the college, which can diminish the grace and favour of the grant."

When the measure thus indicated was introduced it soon appeared that the no-papery cry had not lost its efficacy, either in the House or out of doors. Churchmen and dissenters, supporters and opponents of the government, combined to oppose it, while the whigs and radicals gave their support to the measure. When, therefore, Sir Robert Peel introduced the measure of which he had given notice in the terms already quoted, he spoke amidst

the loud applause of his usual opponents and the chilling silence or loud dissent of his followers. Before he commenced his address a scene occurred which must have given great pain to his sensitive nature. The Speaker called on those who were entrusted with petitions against the increase of the Maynooth grant to present them. The occupants of the ministerial benches rose *en masse*, while the Opposition kept their seats and roared with laughter. The government, however, carried the second reading of this bill by a majority of 147, and the third by a majority of 133, and it passed without any important alteration. Another shock was given to the more extreme conservatives by the introduction of a bill by Sir J. Graham for the establishment of colleges in Ireland in which no definite religious instruction was to be given. It was denounced by Sir R. Inglis as a gigantic scheme of godless education, and opposed on the same grounds by Mr. O'Connell and Lord J. Russell; but was carried through all its stages by large majorities.

Questions of financial reform had now acquired the place of paramount importance which in preceding parliaments had belonged to questions of parliamentary, municipal, and administrative reform. Sir R. Peel proposed the continuance of the income-tax as a means of allowing him to carry on the policy of the remission of duties that pressed heavily on the trade, industry, and commerce of the country, which he had so boldly and successfully commenced; and the plan he recommended was adopted by a majority of 133.

The question of agricultural distress occupied a large share of the attention of the House of Commons. Mr. Cobden asked for a committee on the subject, pledging himself to convince it that it was the inevitable consequence of that very protection which was cried up as the mainstay of agricultural prosperity. On the other hand, Mr. Miles demanded protection for every branch of native industry. He was warmly supported by a little knot of clever young men, who attracted much attention by the extravagance of their Toryism, and formed a party known throughout the country as "Young England," and of which Mr. Disraeli, the Hon. Mr. Smytho, and Lord J. Manners were the most prominent members. The first-mentioned of these three gentlemen had already gained the ear of the House by extraordinary readiness in repartee, and by the sarcastic severity with which he attacked the policy of the government. On this occasion he denounced a conservative government as an organized hypocrisy, and the phrase was cheered by the ultra-protectionists with a zest which showed

that, in spite of all the efforts made by the government to conciliate, the hostility and suspicion with which they regarded the government were increasing. Lord J. Russell, on the other hand, did not hesitate to denounce protection as "the bane of agriculture."

Throughout the session the government resolutely and successfully maintained that middle position of moderate protection which it had taken up at the commencement of its official existence. Receiving support from protectionists against free-traders, and from free-traders against protectionists, it had triumphed in every division by considerable majorities; and it seemed likely, that they would retain office for a long time in spite of the vigour and eloquence with which they were assailed by protectionists, who thought that they did too much, and free-traders, who complained that they did too little. But, an unforeseen calamity disappointed this expectation.

The summer of 1845 had been cold, damp, and rainy in every part of the United Kingdom, and, for the first time since its accession to office, the Peel ministry had to contend with a bad harvest. The crops, though not very deficient, were below the average. But a rot appeared among the potatoes and spread with great rapidity. In the course of a few hours, whole fields of that plant, which seemed to be perfectly healthy, were reduced to a black and fetid mass. This disease was alarming enough in England, but in Ireland, where a large portion of the people depended on this plant for their subsistence, it was likely to be terrible indeed. The sliding scale of the government was thus subjected to a strain to which it had not hitherto been exposed. The emergency which it was constructed to meet had now arisen, and it failed even more signally than a fixed duty could have done if exposed to a similar test. Ministers had before them the prospect of scarcity in England and famine in Ireland. The Anti-corn-law League urged that corn should be admitted freely; and their opinions began to be shared by men who had hitherto held aloof from their agitation. Not only whigs like Lord John Russell and Lord Morpeth, but also conservatives like Lord Ashley, began to press for free-trade, at all events during the continuance of the potato-rot. The last-mentioned nobleman published an address to his constituents containing the bold and honest declaration that, in his opinion, the destiny of the corn-laws was fixed. Meanwhile the prime minister was in a state of great perplexity. With this terrible scourge of famine impending over the country, what was he, as the responsible adviser of the crown, to do? Should he fulfil

the predictions of those who had so often accused him of intending to betray the cause he had volunteered to defend? On the other hand, should he allow the duty he owed to his party to prevent him from discharging the higher duty he owed to the crown as its principal adviser, and to the people as their chosen leader? There was one plain and obvious course before him—that of opening the ports and allowing the free entrance of foreign grain. This had already been done in Belgium, Holland, Germany, Russia, and Turkey. But if he opened the ports, could he close them again? If he allowed the people once to taste the sweets of free trade, would they be willing to return to the bitterness of monopoly; especially at a time when the Anti-corn-law League was deluging the country with tracts and lectures, and was straining every nerve to render protection impossible? With such thoughts as these continually passing through his mind, he summoned his colleagues to a cabinet council on the 1st of November, and proposed to them “that the duties on the import of foreign grain should be suspended for a limited period, either by order in council or legislative enactment, parliament being summoned without delay.” At the same time he frankly told them that he considered the proceeding he recommended involved the necessity of an entire reconsideration of the corn-laws, and that the measure to be adopted must provide for their gradual reduction and final abolition. He was too wise not to see that a return to protection would be impossible, and too honest to conceal from his colleagues the conclusion to which he had been brought. Only three of them, Lord Aberdeen, Sir J. Graham, and Mr. Sidney Herbert, were prepared to agree with his proposal, and therefore it was for the present abandoned. Meanwhile, as the danger became more imminent and more manifest, surprise and indignation began to be expressed at the inaction of the government. On the 22nd of November a letter appeared from Lord J. Russell which contained the following passages:—

“The imposition of any duty at present, without a provision for its extinction within a short period, would but prolong a contest already sufficiently fruitful of animosity and discontent. The struggle to make bread scarce and dear, when it is clear that part at least of the additional price goes to increase rent, is a struggle deeply injurious to an aristocracy which (this quarrel once removed) is strong in property, strong in the construction of our legislature, strong in opinion, strong in ancient associations and in the memory of immortal services.”

The letter from which these lines are extracted brought public

opinion and public censure to bear strongly on the inaction of the ministry. Another cabinet-council was summoned, at which Sir R. Peel renewed the recommendation he had made on the 1st of November, with the exception of that part of it relating to the order in council; and now, so rapid had been the progress of conviction among his colleagues, that the cabinet, with only two exceptions, and subsequently with only that of Lord Stanley, was prepared to accept his recommendation. The two dissidents were willing to consent to a suspension but not to a final withdrawal of protection. They therefore determined to resign, and their resignation drew after it the dissolution of the cabinet, the members of which were doubtless glad to escape from the necessity of making a change they had hitherto strenuously resisted. Their resignation was accepted by the queen on the 9th of December. The protectionists, though they had not yet formed themselves into a separate party, loudly proclaimed their delight at the termination of the "organized hypocrisy" of a conservative government. Lord Stanley declined to attempt to form a ministry, and announced to the sovereign as well as to others his intention to promote the passing of the measures which Sir R. Peel might think it necessary to propose. Lord J. Russell, who was next sent for, also failed. Sir R. Peel was thus almost compelled to retain office, and the rest of the cabinet also remained, with the exception of Lord Stanley, replaced by Mr. Gladstone. The opening of parliament was expected with great and general impatience. The protectionists, infuriated at what they not unnaturally regarded as the treachery of their leaders, were far from regarding themselves as beaten. They knew that they could still count on a large majority in both Houses, and though not unaware of the danger in which they were placed by the desertion of those whom they had reluctantly and suspiciously followed, they prepared themselves to fight a desperate battle, and at least to die game.

CHAPTER X.

THE ANTI-CORN-LAW LEAGUE.

BEFORE we enter on our narrative of the events of the year 1846, it is necessary that we should preface it with an account of the origin and progress of the powerful organisation which forced a protectionist ministry, backed by a large protectionist majority in both Houses of Parliament, to propose and carry through a bill for the abolition of that very protection to which it owed its existence.

In doing this, we shall have to trace the course of an agitation without a parallel in the history of the world for the energy with which it was conducted, the rapid advances it made, the speedy and complete success that crowned its efforts, the great change it wrought in the public opinion and the consequent legislation of the country, overcoming prejudice and passion, dispelling ignorance and conquering powerful interests, with no other weapons than those of reason and that eloquence which great truths and strong convictions inspire.

The centre of the agitation was Manchester. No town in the kingdom had advanced more rapidly in weight and importance during the period whose events we have narrated. At the commencement of that period it was a political cipher, unrepresented in parliament, and having the municipal institutions of a village. It had now grown to be the metropolis of the northern and midland counties, and the centre of a district which was regarded as one that was emerging from barbarism, the inhabitants of which still used an uncouth dialect which provoked the derision of their southern countrymen; and which was chiefly known by its smoking chimneys, its perpetual rains, the length and severity of its winter, its almost sunless summer, as well as by a lawless turbulence which embarrassed the government, perplexed

the legislature, and dismayed the inhabitants of the more favoured parts of the kingdom. Notwithstanding all these disadvantages, this cheerless region was rapidly advancing in population, intelligence, wealth, and the influence it exercised over the growth and direction of the public opinion of the country. Thus the district of which Manchester was the centre, though just emerging from political nullity, and presenting an almost repulsive ruggedness, had acquired a sudden importance, began to manifest an extraordinary energy, and to rival the metropolis itself in the influence it exercised over the progress of civilisation and the march of legislative improvement. The enfranchised city seemed determined to show its appreciation of its newly acquired privileges by the use it made of them. From the very first moment that Manchester had been permitted to send representatives to the House of Commons, its voice had been given in favour of free trade in no indistinct tones. When the question was first brought forward it assumed the character of a struggle between the manufacturing and the agricultural districts; and Manchester, as the centre of the former, naturally took the lead in it.

Such an enterprise as that which the free-traders undertook seemed at first sight almost quixotic. Notwithstanding the increased number of representatives which the Reform Bill had given to the manufacturing districts in the House of Commons, the landed interest still returned nine-tenths of its members. The whole of the House of Lords belonged to it. Therefore it does no small credit to the sagacity and courage of those who first entered on this struggle that they should have ventured on an enterprise apparently so hopeless, confiding in the goodness of their cause and in the power of free discussion to secure its eventual triumph.

The agitation of this question commenced towards the end of the year 1836. It was a period of great depression of trade and general suffering throughout the country. An Anti-corn-law Association was formed in London, which displayed a list of twenty-two M.P.'s at the head of its members, and enjoyed a momentary importance. It was soon found, however, that the metropolis was not the place in which the movement was likely to be vigorously worked or efficiently supported. If it was ever to be won at all, it must be won by vigorous agitation; and of that agitation Manchester must be the head-quarters. Accordingly a new association was formed there, and began to raise funds and seek to diffuse information by means of tracts and pamphlets. An incident which occurred during the year 1838 gave a new impulse to their agitation, and

suggested a means of carrying it forward, which was afterwards employed with great effect. The town of Bolton-le-Moors contained at this time upwards of 50,000 inhabitants, whom the commercial crisis which then prevailed had thrown into the most cruel distress. Out of the fifty manufacturing establishments which the town at that time contained, thirty were closed, and more than 5000 workmen did not know where to find the means of subsistence. Nearly a fourth part of the houses of the town were deserted, and the prisons were literally crammed with persons whom despair and hunger had driven to commit some offence against the laws. Children died of hunger in the arms of their mothers. Fathers, unable to find food for their families, fled from the spectacle of their misery, and left them to shift for themselves. These facts were brought under the notice of the House of Commons by Dr. Bowring, one of the representatives of the town in parliament. But nothing effectual had been done. In the midst of this frightful state of things, in the month of August, 1838, Dr. Birney, an old physician of Bolton, announced that he intended to deliver a lecture on the corn-law and its effects, in the theatre of the town. A great multitude assembled to hear him, and the building was crowded in every part. But the would-be lecturer was so unnerved by finding himself in the presence of an audience so much larger than, and probably so different from, that which he had expected to address, and by the disorderly conduct of many of them, that he was unable to proceed. A serious riot seemed inevitable. At this critical moment, Mr. Thommasson, a gentleman well known in Bolton, said to a young surgeon named Paulton, sitting near him, and whom he knew to be an able and ready speaker, "Do, pray, go on the stage and say something to the meeting." Mr. Paulton ran round to the stage, and extemporised a speech against the corn-laws and the sufferings they inflicted on the working classes, which was received with tremendous applause. Thus the meeting, which at one time seemed likely to end in serious confusion, was turned into a great success. He was asked to repeat his speech; which he did, with an array of fresh facts and arguments; and the second discourse was even more successful than the first. Dr. Bowring happened to be at Manchester at the time, and as a committee was sitting there to inquire into the causes of the prevailing distress, and to endeavour to provide a remedy for it, he induced them to engage Mr. Paulton to deliver a lecture in the Corn-Exchange of that town, the largest building then available for the purpose. He was as successful there as he had been in his own town; and was then regularly engaged to go through the manufacturing districts

to prove to their inhabitants that the corn-laws were the cause of the evils they were suffering, and to persuade them to unite in a great effort to procure their repeal. Thus commenced the systematic diffusion of information on the corn-law question, by lectures and other means, which was carried out on a scale never equalled in any other age or country. Another great step in the free-trade agitation was taken in the course of the same year by Mr. J. B. Smith, afterwards the first chairman of the Anti-corn-law League. He submitted to the Manchester Chamber of Commerce a petition in favour of the repeal of all duties on corn, supported by several speakers, one of whom was Mr. Cobden, then chiefly known as a successful calico-printer. The petition was adopted by a majority of six to one.

These successes were followed by new and still more vigorous efforts. An Anti-corn-law Association had been started. It was superseded by the Anti-corn-law League, composed of delegates from different towns. To secure unity of action, the central office was established in Manchester.

Never was an agitation carried on with such vigour, industry, and untiring perseverance. The leading spirits of the league gave themselves up to the work. Many of them almost entirely neglected their own business in order to carry it forward. Mr. Cobden, who had hitherto run a most successful career as a calico-printer, was now obliged to choose between the sacrifice of that career and the sacrifice of the great cause that he had espoused; and he determined to incur any risk and any loss rather than desert the agitation in which he had engaged. Others, more fortunate, were able, like Mr. Bright, to devolve the care of their business on relatives or partners, who cheerfully undertook the additional labour thus cast on them. During six years what may be called the inner council of the league met twice a day at Newall's-buildings, Market-street, Manchester, to decide on the steps to be taken in order to secure the final triumph of free trade. Here it was that the real business of the league was done. An enormous issue of tracts, pamphlets, and newspapers, was followed up by the dispatch of an army of lecturers who exposed the fallacy of the arguments by which the system of protection was upheld, and challenged discussion on the questions they raised. The upholders of monopoly saw with dismay farm-labourers and farmers having their eyes rapidly opened to the fact that whoever else might be interested in maintaining the protective laws, they certainly were not. The lecturers were not allowed to disseminate their views without opposition. The

formation of the league led to the formation of an antagonistic society, denominated "The Central Agricultural Society of Great Britain and Ireland." This association, however, was rather a help than a hindrance to the work of the league. By promoting discussion, it drew attention to the arguments of the free-traders, and thus hastened the spread and prevalence of the truth. But if its aims were thus advanced by its opponents, they were no less the powerfully aided by the reduction of the newspaper duty, and adoption, first, of the fourpenny, and then of the penny postage-stamp; which enabled it to carry on its proselytizing efforts on a far larger scale than would otherwise have been possible. Then, again, the railway lines that had been laid down transported the lecturers of the league from place to place with a rapidity that would have been out of the question in the old days of the stage-coaches. The great majority of the newspapers also gave it very valuable aid, though the *Times* still withheld its powerful assistance. A "Manchester Working-man's Free-trade Association," was strong enough to triumph over a very formidable Chartist opposition at a town's meeting expressly called to consider the propriety of petitioning in favour of free trade.

The success which had attended the efforts of the league encouraged its leading members to renewed exertions in the year 1840. A meeting of delegates from all parts of the kingdom was held at Manchester; and as that town had no room large enough to contain those who were expected to be present on the occasion, a building was constructed expressly for the accommodation of the assembly, and for the general purposes of the league. Mr. Cobden, who was now just beginning to take that lead in the agitation which his talents, his eloquence, and the depth and earnestness of his convictions, were sure eventually to secure for him, was the owner of the field on which the "Peterloo massacre" occurred, and he placed it at the disposal of the league for the erection of the proposed building. A spacious wooden hall, capable of holding a larger number of persons than the grand room of the magnificent structure which bears its name and occupies its site, was built, and named the Free-trade Hall. Its erection was accomplished in eleven days by the labour of one hundred men; and on two successive days banquets were held in it, followed by able speeches from Daniel O'Connell and other members of parliament, as well as several leaders of the free-trade party.

The announcement made by Lord J. Russell, on the 7th of May, of the intention of government to propose a fixed duty of eight

shillings the quarter on corn, in lieu of the present sliding scale, was met by the league with a resolution to agitate more strongly than ever for the total and immediate repeal of the bread tax, and to accept no compromise. Measures were promptly taken to carry this resolution into effect. Communications were made to the principal associations throughout the country, recommending renewed and still more vigorous agitation. On the other hand, the chartists, still guided by Mr. O'Connor, endeavoured to compel the league to combine with them for the attainment of their objects, and to force them to use their organisation for the double purpose of promoting the repeal of the corn-laws and carrying the five points of the Charter. The free-traders, though many of them were very favourably disposed towards the objects at which the chartists aimed, were wisely unwilling to introduce such an apple of discord into their camp, or to consent to an alliance that was likely to alienate many who were rapidly coming round to their views. The consequence of this refusal was that the chartists attended the free-trade meetings, and sometimes carried amendments in accordance with their own political views. The protectionists naturally endeavoured to avail themselves of those chartist tactics in order to defeat and embarrass the league. A meeting called in Stevenson's-square, Manchester, and presided over by Mr. Cobden, was attended not only by a large body of chartists, but by two emissaries of the Central Agricultural Association. But the cause of free trade triumphed, and the meeting passed by large majorities the resolutions which the free-traders submitted to it. A great conference of ministers of religion of all denominations was appointed to be held in Manchester, at the time fixed for the meeting of the Wesleyan Conference, in the hope that a large number of the Wesleyan ministers who were assembled in Manchester would assist at the sittings of the free-trade conference. This expectation, however, was disappointed. Only one Wesleyan minister, one clergyman of the Church of England, and two ministers of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, accepted the invitations, which were sent, as far as could be ascertained, to every minister of every denomination of Christians in the United Kingdom. However, upwards of 700 nonconformist ministers assembled, and, after listening to the statements submitted to them by some of the leading members of the league, passed resolutions strongly condemnatory of the tax on corn. This meeting had a double advantage. It procured a condemnation of the corn-tax which carried with it no inconsiderable weight, and it furnished the league with an opportunity of indoctrinating with

the principles of free trade upwards of 700 men of education and intelligence from all parts of the kingdom, who would thus be enabled and stimulated to diffuse those principles. The accession of Sir R. Peel to office did not discourage the free-traders. They soon saw that they had in him a minister who took very enlightened views of all financial questions. They could not help contrasting the mastery he possessed of all the bearings of the question with the ignorance respecting it that had been manifested by his predecessor; and they hoped that by carrying on their agitation vigorously they would make him see the necessity of yielding on this question, as he had yielded on that of Catholic emancipation. These hopes were strengthened by the corresponding fears and jealousies of the more extreme protectionists, who, after the first burst of exultation on the overthrow of the Whig administration, began to suspect that their champion would turn out to be their betrayer. The free-traders resolved to carry on their agitation more actively than ever. More funds were required for it; and in order to obtain them it was resolved that recourse should be had to a great anti-corn-law bazaar, which was held in the Theatre Royal, Manchester, at the beginning of the year 1842, and produced a clear profit of about ten thousand pounds. An anti-corn-law conference was appointed to sit in Palace-yard through a great part of the session, watching with intense interest the proceedings of parliament, lending its aid in every possible way in support of the various free-trade motions that were submitted to the legislature, sending deputations to those ministers whose official positions imposed on them the duty of receiving representations on the subject, and superintending the progress of the agitation both in parliament and out of doors.

The 30th of January, 1843, witnessed the opening of a new and more substantial free-trade hall in the place of the temporary building which had been destroyed by fire. It was at once put into frequent requisition. Banquets, meetings, and conferences designed to promote the cause of free trade were held in it, and attended by thousands, not only of the citizens of Manchester, but of the inhabitants of the surrounding towns and villages, which the railroads recently constructed were now beginning to bring into closer connection with the cotton metropolis. In London the league could not procure a room large enough to contain the multitudes who flocked to their meetings, attracted chiefly by the eloquence of Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright, now actively associated with him in the advocacy of free trade. Exeter Hall was applied for, but refused. Drury-lane Theatre was engaged for one day of each week in Lent,

during which the performances at the theatres were prohibited. Crowded and enthusiastic audiences assembled within its walls, and were addressed by Messrs. Cobden and Bright, and other leaders of the agitation. But they were soon driven from this refuge, in consequence of the interference of the proprietors of the theatre, who prevented Mr. Macready, the lessee, from allowing it to be used for political purposes.

Meanwhile the agitation was passing through a new phase. Emboldened by the success which had hitherto attended their efforts, the council of the league resolved to carry the war more vigorously into the enemy's camp. In pursuance of this resolution, they appointed meetings to be held in the very strongholds of protection, at Bedford, at Pennenden Heath near Maidstone, at Carlisle, and many other places. In vain did the champions of protection make feeble efforts to withstand them at these assemblies. Neither their clamours nor their arguments availed anything against the powerful reasonings and persuasive eloquence of the free-traders. Mr. Cobden attended no fewer than twenty-nine great country meetings, at all of which he was triumphantly successful. But the protectionists, though beaten at every public meeting, and worsted in every discussion, could still boast that they possessed an overwhelming majority in the representative body, determined, come what might, to maintain protection, and it seemed only too likely, considering the ascendancy enjoyed by the landlord interest, that the struggle would be maintained for many years. The free-trade party in the House of Commons, though reinforced by the addition to its ranks of 35 members, could still only muster about 125, against 533 on whose support their opponents could reckon. Dispassionate men saw that many efforts must still be made, and that many years would probably elapse, before such a minority could be converted into a majority. The leaders of the league were, however, by no means disheartened, and braced themselves up for renewed exertions. Twelve or fourteen lecturers were now hard at work. Cobden and Bright were ubiquitous, holding meetings, and carrying all before them wherever they went. Tracts, pamphlets, placards, anti-corn-law wafers, were all diligently employed in the work of proselytism. A new paper, called the *League*, published weekly, took the place of the fortnightly *Anti-Bread-Tax Circular*. Covent-garden Theatre was engaged for fifty nights, at an expense of three thousand pounds. Fifty thousand pounds had already been subscribed and expended, and it was resolved that an additional sum of 100,000*l.* should at once be raised, to carry on the war against protection.

Meanwhile this league was continually gaining strength, through the accession to its ranks of men occupying high positions, and remarkable for their caution. Mr. S. Jones Loyd, now Lord Overstone, openly avowed himself a convert to free-trade principles, joined the league, and sent a contribution of 50*l*. Earl Fitzwilliam attended a great free-trade meeting at Doncaster, where, standing side by side with Cobden and Bright, he spoke strongly and ably against the corn-laws. In London, Mr. Baring, though supported by the whole influence of the government, was defeated in a contest for the city by the free-trade candidate, Mr. Pattison. In the old cathedral city of Durham Mr. Bright, though a Quaker, had been elected its representative, the Dean, Dr. Waddington, bravely voting for him. On the 18th of November the *Times* gave a testimony in favour of the growing weight and influence of the league, all the more valuable because it was reluctantly and grudgingly given.

At the commencement of the year 1844, the Marquis of Westminster, the wealthiest nobleman in England, addressed a letter to Mr. George Wilson, chairman of the league, in which he announced his intention to contribute the sum of 500*l*. to the funds of the league. Lord Morpeth, who since the fall of Lord Melbourne's administration, of which he had been a member, had lived in retirement, and who had hitherto been regarded as an opponent of the free-trade party, attended a great meeting of that party at Wakefield; where he spoke in such a manner as to show that he was almost a free-trader, and to draw forth the warm and enthusiastic applause of an assembly devoted to that cause. But while the league was receiving these important accessions to its ranks, the ministry showed no disposition to yield, nor did the large party which sat behind them in the House of Commons. On the contrary, both in parliament and elsewhere, they took every opportunity of dilating on the prosperity which the country enjoyed as a proof that the policy they had determined to adopt was answering the expectations they had formed of it; and the prime minister could exclaim, amidst the approving shouts of his delighted followers, "The experience we have had of the present law has not shaken my preference for a graduated duty; and although I consider it inconsistent with my duty to make engagements for adherence to existing laws, under all circumstances, in order to conciliate support, I can say that the government have never contemplated, and do not contemplate, any alterations of the existing law." This declaration, intended to allay the suspicions

and jealousies of the more ardent protectionists, also served to announce to members of the league that they must expect nothing from the present government. The work of instructing the people on the question of free-trade had been pretty effectually carried out; but the not less necessary work of revising the electoral lists had been neglected.

Sir R. Peel, when out of office, had said to his party, "Register, register, register!" and his followers, by adopting that advice had been enabled to defeat the Whigs and force him into office; and now the league was raising the cry, with still greater effect; and Mr. Cobden added to it another, "Qualify, qualify, qualify!" He pointed out to the free-traders that by investing their money in land, instead of putting it in the savings-bank, they would place it where it would be perfectly secure, where it might be recovered whenever wanted, where it would yield interest, and confer the franchise; and in the same way, if they wanted to give a "nest-egg" to their children, they might, by giving it in the shape of a piece of land, confer on them a vote, which they might use to defend themselves and their children from political oppression.

Such was the state of the anti-corn-law agitation at the close of the year 1844: much had been already done; much also remained to be effected. When the session of 1845 opened, there sat, as before, the serried ranks of the protectionists, distrusting their leader, but unable to find another. And with all the labours of the league, with all its diligence in instructing, in qualifying, or registering voters, it seemed as though many years must still elapse before that strong party could be broken up, and the protection it maintained be swept away. Still the league showed no signs of discouragement. Before parliament assembled, a great meeting was held at Covent-garden, for the purpose of making known to its members and to the country generally the manner in which it was intended that the anti-corn-law agitation should be conducted during the year 1845. It was one striking characteristic of this agitation that there was no secrecy or concealment about it. The leaguers were no conspirators; the object at which they aimed, and the means by which they hoped to accomplish it, were fully and publicly proclaimed. The proceedings of this formidable body were such as could only be carried on in a country long habituated to freedom. But now they had begun to change their character. The meetings were no longer for the diffusion of information on the advantages of free trade; they were strictly business meetings, having for their object to carry into effect the plans which had been

devised, and to induce those who attended them, and those who read the reports of them, to proceed at once themselves, and to urge as many of their friends as they could influence, to qualify themselves as voters by purchasing forty-shilling freeholds. The work of removing the ignorance that still remained with regard to the question, and of answering objections, was not neglected; but the principal aim of the league now was to place the largest possible number of free-traders on the electoral register.

The budget of this year afforded much more satisfaction to free-traders than to protectionists. Even those parts of it which the free-traders disliked, such as the retention of the duties on corn and the differential duties on sugar, were apologised for, as special and temporary exceptions to the principle of free trade, rendered necessary by peculiar circumstances. At a meeting held in Covent-garden Theatre on the evening of the 19th of February, this free-trade character of the budget was dwelt on with much complacency and satisfaction, as a proof of the progress that the principles of free-trade were making. At this meeting, also, the pecuniary history of the league was thus related by Mr. Bright:—

“In the year 1839 we first asked for subscriptions, and 5000*l.* was given. In 1840 we asked for more, and between 7000*l.* and 8000*l.* was subscribed. In 1841 we held the great conference at Manchester, at which upwards of 700 ministers of religion attended. In 1842 we had our great bazaar in Manchester, from which 10,000*l.* was realized. In 1843 we asked for 50,000*l.*, and got it. In 1844 we called for 100,000*l.*, and between 80,000*l.* and 90,000*l.* has been paid in, besides what will be received from the bazaar to be held in May. This year is yet young, but we have not been idle. We have asked our free-trade friends in the northern counties to convert some of their property, so as to be able to defend their rights and properties at the hustings. This has been done, and it now appears that, at the recommendation of the council of the league, our friends in Lancashire, Cheshire, and Yorkshire have invested a sum of not less than 250,000*l.* in the purchase of county qualifications.”

The bazaar alluded to was held in London at the appointed time. Great preparations had been made for it, sanguine expectations were entertained respecting it, and much interest was taken in it. No such bazaar was ever held in the world before. More than 20,000*l.* was realized in admissions and sales, besides 5000*l.* given in direct contributions. It was followed at a later period of

the year by another bazaar in Manchester. Meanwhile, parliament, as we have seen, was engaged in repeated discussions on the question of free trade in various ways, but without any definite result. The weather seemed to give promise of an abundant harvest; and Peel, suspected by the ultra-protectionists, but zealously supported by the more sensible and liberal portion of the conservative party, stood by his free-trade measures and his modified sliding scale, and seemed likely to remain at the head of affairs, carrying out this policy, for some years to come. Before the close of the year, the league succeeded in collecting 17,000*l.* in addition to the 100,000*l.* it had proposed to raise.

And now there came heavy rains. At first it was hoped that the moisture would swell the grain, and cause the harvest to be more abundant; but they continued all through August and with little intermission through September. Still it was hoped that, after all, things were not so bad as they seemed to be. It was not till the middle of October had arrived that it began to be generally admitted that there was a great failure in the wheat crops.

But the rain, which had done this direful mischief in England, had produced far more serious consequences in Ireland. We need not here repeat the tale of the rotting of the potatoes, and the consequent imminence of famine in that unhappy country. Subscriptions were promptly entered into in various parts of the kingdom to alleviate the distress caused by this terrible visitation. But what could private liberality do to relieve a starving nation? The league at once demanded an order in council for the free admission of grain. The cry thus raised was taken up by thousands who had hitherto held themselves aloof from the agitation, and by some who up to this time had been reckoned among its staunchest opponents. The cabinet, as we have seen, was deliberating, but could not come to any resolution. But the course of events would not wait for their decision. While the ministry was doing nothing, famine was stalking on in Ireland. While Peel was hesitating, Lord J. Russell was acting promptly and decisively. On the 22nd of November he published the celebrated letter at Edinburgh, which we have already referred to. Two days after its publication, Lord Morpeth announced that he had made up his mind to cast in his lot with the free-traders. On the 4th of December the *Times*, in a leading article—the first line of which, “The doom of the corn-laws is sealed,” went through the empire like an electric shock—announced that the cabinet had decided on proposing a measure for the repeal of the corn-laws, which would be introduced in the House of Lords by the

Duke of Wellington, and by Sir R. Peel in the other House. This statement was denounced by the *Standard* as an "atrocious fabrication;" but it was so completely in accordance with the fears of one party, and the calculations of the other, that, it obtained general credit, and was immediately followed by a great reduction in the price of corn.

While Lord J. Russell was labouring to construct his administration, the league was not idle. It was still doubtful whether, with all the assistance that Peel and Wellington were prepared to give him, he would be able to carry the repeal of the corn-laws against the large protectionist majority of the House of Commons, or to force it on the acceptance of the reluctant lords. It was quite certain that he could not succeed unless well backed out of doors. It was felt, therefore, that this was no time for the friends of free trade to put off their armour. All now evidently depended on the exertions put forth at this critical moment. Seventy of the largest contributors to the funds of the league on former occasions were convened in the league rooms on the 13th of December, and resolved that an appeal should be made to the public for 250,000*l.* ¹

The session of 1846 commenced on the 14th of January, and was opened by the queen in person. The speech from the throne dwelt on the success which had attended the removal of restrictive duties, and suggested that the same policy should be carried further, without touching more directly on the vexed question of the corn-laws. Ministers were anxious to avoid all premature discussion of that important question, and to bring forward the measures by which they proposed to deal with it with the least possible delay. But Lord F. Egerton and Mr. Beckett Denison, the mover and the seconder of the address, could hardly pass by in silence a topic which was uppermost in the thoughts of all those in whose presence they spoke. Both candidly admitted that their opinions on this question had undergone a great change. Then came the turn of Sir R. Peel. He rose, amidst the mournful silence of his own supporters and the triumphant cheers of the opposition, to announce that his opinions in reference to the corn-laws had undergone an entire change, and that the force of events had brought him to the conviction that the protection he had so long supported must be at once relinquished. He had now to employ the arguments which had been so often put forward by the free-traders, and which he himself had so often combated. The House was of course quite prepared for the avowal of a change of opinion, which was already a matter of notoriety. Nevertheless, when it came, it

was received by both sides as if it had been altogether unexpected. It is impossible adequately to depict the rage and indignation of the majority of those who had put their trust in him as their champion against all comers, or the triumph of the free-traders when they heard their own arguments ably reproduced and admirably put to the House by the most formidable opponent of their views, and the last possible defender of the system they had combined to overthrow. It must be confessed that the old supporters of Sir Robert had some grounds for their complaints. He had not taken them sufficiently into his confidence; he had expected them to follow him in his changes of opinion without acquainting them with the reasons by which he had himself been brought to feel the necessity of these changes. But this was not the fault of the man, but rather of his character and temperament. Though so copious, fluent, and self-possessed a public speaker, he was naturally taciturn and shy; and these constitutional defects prevented him from taking council with his supporters, and giving them the explanations they were entitled to expect from their leader.

After reading various communications, showing the extent to which the potato disease prevailed, and the necessity of providing at once against the imminent danger of famine, Sir R. Peel sat down. Then Lord J. Russell rose and gave a full explanation of the course he had adopted during the late ministerial crisis, and of the cause of his failure to form a ministry. He was followed by Mr. Disraeli, the fittest man in the House to give utterance to the feelings of rage and indignation that were boiling in the hearts of the protectionists, who not unnaturally considered that they had been basely and unworthily betrayed by their chosen champion. Hitherto he had borne a name not wholly unknown in the walks of literature. He was the writer of novels remarkable for a wild exuberance of fancy, and for the eccentric character of the political doctrines they aimed at inculcating; he had delivered speeches sparkling with wit, and edged with trenchant sarcasm; yet up to this moment he had not obtained any commanding position in the House and in the country. His time was now come. In the whole of the great body of protectionists, which, after all the defections it had suffered, was still the strongest party in the House, not one was to be found who could give voice like him to the passions by which his party was agitated, or inflict such fierce vengeance on the man whom they regarded as their betrayer. This he did effectually; and from that moment he stood forth, in the eyes of parliament and of the country, as the real standard-bearer, about

whom, not without some repugnance and reluctance, the protectionists rallied.

On the 27th of January, the prime minister came forward to explain his financial plans, which, as was already known, were to include those alterations that he proposed to make in the duties on corn, as well as a measure for their ultimate and not very distant repeal. He announced his intention to abandon the sliding scale entirely; to impose a fixed duty of ten shillings the quarter on corn; when the price of it was forty-eight shillings per quarter to reduce that duty by one shilling for every shilling of rise in price till it reached fifty-three shillings a quarter, when the duty should be four shillings. This was to continue for three years, at the expiration of which period the duty was to be finally abolished. In order to compensate the agriculturists for the loss that these changes would occasion, Sir Robert proposed to lighten some of the burdens with which they were at present loaded. This plan was not likely to satisfy the league,—indeed it could hardly have satisfied Sir Robert himself; but he probably felt that while he was bound by his convictions to carry out the principles of free trade, he was also bound to maintain the revenue, and to use his best endeavours to obtain the most favourable terms possible for the agricultural interest, which had brought him into power under expectations which he now felt himself compelled to disappoint.

A long and desultory discussion took place on the proposal placed before the House, and continued till midnight, when it was arranged that the committee should sit again on the 9th of February, with the understanding that the question placed before the House by the hon. baronet at the head of the ministry would then be fully debated. Mr. Miles proposed that the House resolve itself into committee on that day six months, thus fairly engaging the conflict between the protectionists and the free-traders.

The issue which the amendment raised was unfortunate and ill-chosen. It was in effect to say that the House would not comply with those recommendations of the queen's speech which in the address it had promised to carry out, and that it would refuse so much as even to entertain, not only the proposed alteration of the corn-laws, but the relaxations and reductions of duties which by general consent experience had already proved to be attended with great advantage. However, for twelve long nights the debate was carried on. At length, on the 27th of February, the division took place, and ministers triumphed by a majority of ninety-seven. We do not propose to give any account of this monster debate, the

merits of which were by no means equal to its duration; for it was chiefly made up of attacks on and apologies for the conduct of the government; a very small portion indeed of it being devoted to the narrow issue which the amendment raised.

On the 2nd of March the ministerial plan went through the ordeal of a free-trade attack. Mr. Villiers proposed an amendment, the object of which was to dispense with the three years' interval between the condemnation of the corn laws and their final repeal. In the previous discussion the government had been enabled to defend the protectionists through the assistance they had received from the free-traders, and now they had to fight the free-traders with the assistance of the protectionists. Mr. Villiers had very strong reasons to urge in favour of his motion. It was known that as early as the 1st of November, 1845, in view of the distress then impending over this country, and still more threateningly over Ireland, the premier himself had proposed a temporary suspension of the corn-laws, which on his own admission would have been a virtual abolition of them. He could not deny that since he brought forward that proposal, the distress which prompted him to make it had not abated, and the prospects of the country had not improved. Why, then, should he resist an amendment so much in accordance with his own views and opinions? The protectionists themselves had over and over again said that they preferred immediate repeal, which would let them know the worst, to the state of suspense and uncertainty in which they had so long been kept. On the other hand, the leader of the opposition had distinctly expressed his opinion in favour of immediate repeal. Delay would aggravate the difficulties of the proposed change; for delay would keep up among the agriculturists a hope that protection might after all be retained, and thus prevent them from making the preparations for meeting the altered circumstances in which repeal would place them. For the sake of the people immediate repeal was greatly and manifestly desirable. There had been a deficient harvest in most countries. Already corn destined for this country had found a market at Antwerp. It was quite possible that there might be a series of deficient harvests both here and on the Continent, in which case the proposed duty of four shillings might prevent a great quantity of corn needed for the relief of this country from being imported. Lastly, he referred to a solemn pledge, by which Mr. Cobden and the other leaders of the league had bound themselves to dissolve that body the moment that the abolition of the corn-laws was secured, but to keep it in activity until success had

finally crowned their efforts. He therefore strongly urged the desirableness of a total and immediate repeal of the corn-laws, in order to put an end to the existence of a body so formidable as the league, which, though established for the attainment of great and beneficial ends, was pregnant with danger to the state. On this question Lord J. Russell, Mr. Hume, Mr. Wakley, and several other free-traders, declared that, though preferring total and immediate repeal, they thought it their duty to give their support to the government; which, after a debate extending over two nights, triumphed on a division by a majority of 187.

The whole interest of parliament and the nation throughout this session was so concentrated on this great question, that it was difficult to obtain due attention to subjects of great but less pressing importance. Every artifice of delay was employed by the more violent opponents of free trade. Sir Robert now underwent a not altogether undeserved retribution for the encouragement he had given to the factious opposition offered to the Reform Bill. But while thus suffering the punishment due to past political errors, he nobly redeemed them by the patience and the wonderful command of temper and courtesy he displayed under the most galling provocations. He so frankly and cheerfully admitted his own errors; he showed such a mastery of every principle and every detail of the measure under discussion; he displayed so strong a desire to put the best possible construction on the motives of his adversaries; he was so anxious to seize every opportunity of giving the honour of the great reform he was engaged in carrying out to those to whom it was due—and especially to Mr. Cobden; he manifested such evident indifference to power and office; that his change of opinion served to raise him immeasurably in the eyes of all candid and unprejudiced men throughout the country, and nowhere more so than in the House of Commons, through which the measure passed by a majority of 98.

The bill was then carried up to the House of Lords. It was certain to meet with a strong opposition in an assembly which probably did not number among its members more than five or six really convinced free-traders. No fewer than fifty-three lords took part in the discussion of the question. Lords Stanley and Ashburton led the opposition to the bill; Lords Brougham, Grey, Clarendon, and Lansdowne were foremost among its supporters, but the immense influence which the Duke of Wellington enjoyed in the House, and the earnest support he gave to the bill, induced the greater number of their lordships either to give it their vote, or to abstain from

opposing it. He grounded the support he gave to it on the duty and gratitude he owed to the crown; on the recommendation of the measure in the queen's speech; on the impolicy of putting the House of Lords in opposition to the two other branches of the legislature; and on the danger of forcing a dissolution of parliament under existing circumstances. Into the merits of the bill itself he did not enter. Probably he regarded it as an inevitable evil, and as such accepted it. He and the lords who gave him their confidence had learnt a lesson from the Reform Bill that they were not likely to forget. His prudent counsels prevailed, and the second reading of the bill, which practically settled the question, was carried by a majority of 47.

Sir R. Peel's financial measures included many farther reductions of customs duties. To some of these strong opposition was offered, especially to the lowering of the duties on hops and timber; but the government succeeded in carrying all its proposals.

The increasing distress of Ireland was attended by an increase of those crimes of violence with which almost every page in the history of that country is more or less stained. The number of these offences in 1844 was 1495; in 1845 it had risen to 3642, and was still increasing. Under such circumstances it was the clear duty of the government to ask parliament for additional repressive powers. A bill was prepared empowering the Lord Lieutenant to proclaim any district in which many murders and other crimes of violence had been committed, to appoint stipendiary magistrates and increase the police force, which was authorized to search inns and taverns, and apprehend persons out of their houses between sunset and sunrise. It was introduced into the House of Lords, and passed there without difficulty. In the House of Commons it encountered a strenuous opposition. Even the first reading, which by almost invariable custom is accorded as a matter of course to all bills coming down from the House of Lords, was contested, but carried by a majority of 49 votes, the protectionists supporting the government. A long interval was allowed to elapse before anything farther was done in the matter, and the motion for the second reading was not brought forward till the 9th of June. Lord G. Bentinck declared that he was an advocate for protection to the British farmer, but not to the Irish murderer; and that, though he regarded the measure as unconstitutional in many of its provisions, he would have supported it if he had not considered himself as released from all obligation to do so by the conduct of the ministers. The charges made by Lord G. Bentinck in the early part of the

debate were reiterated and reinforced by Mr. Disraeli towards the close of it, and were ably answered by Sir R. Peel. A few calm words from Mr. Cobden, announcing that, although he would vote with the protectionists, he entirely disapproved of, and separated himself from, all participation in their attacks on Sir R. Peel, closed the debate on the evening of the 26th of June. On the division the numbers were—

For the second reading	219
Against	292
Majority against the government	73

This vote involved the overthrow of the government of Sir R. Peel. There can be no doubt that he must have been rejoiced to be released from the situation he occupied. The labours he had undergone, the bitter reproaches with which he had been loaded by his former supporters, had told on his constitution. His eye had lost its brightness, and his step its accustomed firmness; a ring of melancholy was distinguishable in the tones of his voice. He was weary of the strife. Of the emoluments of office he had always been independent and careless. In fact, the expenditure that his office caused him to make probably exceeded the amount of his official salary. He was conscious, too, of having rendered to his country a great service; and he knew that the enthusiastic cheers with which he was greeted as he quitted the House of Commons after his defeat would find an echo in the hearts of the great majority of his countrymen in every part of the empire. Above all, he was a man whose taste and character led him to find his chief happiness in the bosom of his family, and he rejoiced in an event which enabled him to enjoy these private and domestic pleasures, of which the all-engrossing duties of his office had to a great extent deprived him. He was fortunate in the opportuneness of his political demise. On the very evening of his defeat the corn bill passed the House of Lords. About the same time he received the gratifying intelligence that the Oregon dispute with the United States of America had been satisfactorily settled. It now only remained to announce formally to the two Houses the resignation which, as a matter of course, must follow such a defeat as the government had undergone. This announcement was made on the 29th of June. The Duke of Wellington in the House of Lords, and Sir R. Peel in the House of Commons, stated that the resignation of the cabinet had been accepted by the queen,

and that Lord J. Russell had been commanded by her Majesty to form a new administration. The Duke of Wellington confined himself to a simple statement of the fact of the retirement from office of himself and his colleagues in the ministry, and with proposing that the Lords should continue to sit, but only for the transaction of pressing and necessary business, until the new cabinet had entered upon its duties. Sir R. Peel spoke at some length in abdicating his position not only as prime minister, but as the leader of a great party. In doing so, he briefly reviewed the important questions which he had been called on to deal with. He congratulated himself and the House on the results he had been enabled to achieve, and thanked those who had so strongly opposed him for having loyally accepted the decision of parliament on measures which they were fully entitled to censure and combat. He stated that whatever merit might attach to the measures he had introduced, did not belong to him, but ought to be attached to the name of the man whose pure motives, indefatigable energy, unpretending and unadorned eloquence, had forced them all to listen to him—the name of RICHARD COBDEN.

He thus concluded his address: "In quitting power I shall leave behind a name severely blamed, I fear, by many men, who, without any personal interest, but only with a view to the public good, will bitterly deplore the rupture of party ties, from a belief that fidelity to party engagements and the maintenance of great parties are powerful and essential means of government; that I shall also be blamed by others, who, without personal interest, adhere to the principle of protection, which they regard as necessary to the prosperity of the country; that I shall leave a name detested by all monopolists, who, from less honourable motives, claim a protection by which they largely profit; but I shall, perhaps, leave a name which will sometimes be pronounced with expressions of good-will by those whose lot in this world is to labour, who in the sweat of their brow eat their daily bread, and who may remember me when they renew their strength by food at once abundant and untaxed, and which will be the better relished because no longer embittered by any feeling of injustice."

He resumed his seat amidst the loudest applause from all sides of the House, again and again repeated. When he left Westminster Hall, a vast multitude filled the street. Every head was bared, the crowd made way for him, and many accompanied him in respectful silence to the door of his house. There were at that moment two men who occupied a higher place in the esteem and affection of

their countrymen than had ever been accorded to any statesmen before them. These two men were ROBERT PEEL and RICHARD COBDEN. If anything could increase the feeling of respect with which the former was regarded, it was the announcement that he had refused for himself and his family any title or other public acknowledgment of his great services.

The formation of a new administration was confided to Lord J. Russell, and as the course which had been followed by Sir R. Peel had completely broken up the conservative party, no regularly organized opposition existed either in parliament or in the country. The members of the House of Commons who had accepted office under the new administration were re-elected without opposition, and appeared in their places when parliament reassembled on the 16th of July.

Meanwhile starvation and crime in Ireland were continuing to increase with frightful rapidity. Fifty-eight districts were proclaimed by the lord-lieutenant to be in a state of distress; and distress was a word that was far from adequately expressing the frightful reality. In the district of Skibereen alone, out of 62,000 inhabitants, 5000 died in three months, and 15,000 could not tell in the morning where to look for the food required for the day. At Bantry there were forty verdicts of "died from starvation" given at inquests held at the same time. In other parts of Ireland the deaths were so numerous that the coroners were unable to hold the inquests that were required. In some cases the wretched peasants wounded the cattle they met, and sucked their blood to assuage their hunger. Under such circumstances, it seemed to be a duty incumbent on the government to endeavour to provide extraordinary means for the repression of the crimes of lawless violence which this state of things engendered, and which fearfully aggravated the calamities of Ireland. Therefore, though they had obtained office by voting against the Irish Arms Bill, they found themselves obliged to reproduce it. At the same time they earnestly entreated the House not to judge the policy they intended to pursue towards Ireland by this bill. Finding the objection entertained to some of its provisions to be very strong, Lord J. Russell agreed to strike out of it three or four clauses which he had himself condemned when the measure was brought forward by his predecessors, and the bill was ultimately withdrawn in deference to the strong feeling that prevailed against it in the House, and especially among the supporters of the government.

Parliament reassembled on the 19th of January, and on the 25th

of that month Lord J. Russell explained at great length the plans proposed by the government for meeting the terrible distress that prevailed in Ireland. Large sums were to be expended in giving employment and wages to the suffering Irish; and a poor-law was brought forward, based on the same general principles as the English law, but having some new features introduced into it, which the experience of the working of the poor-law in England had suggested, or the peculiar circumstances and condition of Ireland rendered necessary. All parties displayed a humane and patriotic eagerness to relieve the sufferings of the Irish. A bill was introduced by Lord G. Bentinck for a grant of 16,000,000*l.*, to be expended in the construction of Irish railways. This gigantic scheme was opposed by the government, and rejected by the House; but the government introduced another bill, by which it was to be empowered to make advances to Irish railway companies; though strongly opposed by Sir R. Peel, Mr. Goulburn, and Sir W. Molesworth, it was read a second time by 175 to 62, and accepted by both Houses. Measures were also adopted for the purpose of facilitating emigration from Ireland to the colonies: and the government proposed to meet the Irish distress by a temporary suspension of the corn-laws and the navigation-laws, so far as they affected the importation of corn. Before they decided on this course, they had very anxiously considered whether it would not be better at once to abolish these laws, instead of merely suspending them; and had adopted the latter course in order to disarm as much as possible the opposition which the abolition would have excited, and to procure the adoption with the least possible delay of measures urgently required for the relief of the starving Irish. They passed rapidly through the legislature, and were speedily brought into operation. They were closely followed by the government plan for the modification of the duties on sugar and rum, with a view to compensate in some degree the West-India proprietors for the immediate loss which was likely to follow the abolition of the differential duties on sugars. The proposal, after some discussion in the Commons, and still more in the Lords, was finally adopted without any change.

The government followed the example which their predecessors had set them, of bringing forward the annual financial statement at an early period of the session. It was made on the 22nd of February. After going through the various items of the revenue, the chancellor of the exchequer calculated that it would amount for the year to 52,065,000*l.* On the other hand the estimated

expenditure would be augmented by the increase of the navy and the money that must be spent on our naval stations in consequence of the changes made in modern warfare by the employment of steam power, amounting to 51,570,000*l.*; but this, he said, did not include the extraordinary expenditure caused by the famine in Ireland, which he estimated at the enormous sum of 8,000,000*l.* sterling, in addition to a sum of 2,000,000*l.* that had to be advanced, making a total expenditure on Irish distress of 10,000,000*l.*

This sum was borrowed at 3*l.* 7*s.* 6*d.* per cent. In order to hasten its payment into the treasury, which had been nearly emptied by the demands made on it, the chancellor of the exchequer proposed and carried motions for giving a discount of 5 per cent. to those contributors who should pay their contributions into the Bank of England before the 18th of June, and 4 per cent. to those who should pay them before the 10th of September. A motion made by Mr. Ricardo on the 9th of February, for the appointment of a committee to inquire into the navigation laws, was supported by Mr. M. Gibson and Lord J. Russell on behalf of the government, and by Sir R. Peel, and, notwithstanding the opposition of the protectionists, carried by a majority of ninety-four.

Among the more important bills introduced in the course of this session was one for the shortening of the hours of labour in factories, proposed by Mr. Fielden, member for Oldham, and a very large manufacturer. In asking leave to bring in the bill he stated that his object was to limit the labour of young people between the ages of thirteen and eighteen to twelve hours a day, allowing two hours out of the twelve for meals, that is, to ten hours of actual work per day for five days in the week, and eight hours on Saturdays. He proposed to carry out this alteration by restricting the hours of actual labour to sixty-three hours in the week until the 1st of May, 1848, and after that date to fifty-eight hours in the week; and he farther proposed that the same restriction should apply to females above eighteen years of age.

The government decided to make this bill an open question. Lord J. Russell observed, in the course of the debate on the second reading, that the propriety of parliamentary interference had already been decided, for parliament had interfered. It was, therefore, now only a question of the degree and extent to which parliament should carry its interference. Mr. Roebuck and others contended that the shortening of the duration of the hours of labour must be attended by a diminution of wages; but it was at once replied, that the operatives were quite ready to run that risk in

order to obtain the desired relaxation. Eventually the bill was read a second time by a majority of 195 to 87. When it came into committee, Mr. Bickham Escott attempted to defeat it by moving that the House should go into committee that day six months, thus renewing the discussion which had already taken place on the second reading. Mr. Brotherton, the member for Salford, carried the sympathies of almost every member of the House with him, when, in simple but forcible language, he described the weariness of toil he had endured when a boy working in a factory, and the resolution he then formed, and to which he still adhered, to endeavour to obtain shorter time for the boys who should come after him. Sir J. Graham urged that the question was not whether women should be forced to work twelve hours a day, but whether industrious men should be restrained from working twelve hours a day if they desired to do so. Sir Robert Peel argued against the bill on the ground that it was not for the interest of the working classes themselves that the restrictions it proposed should be adopted.

Notwithstanding the high authority and forcible arguments of many of those who opposed the bill, its advocates triumphed on a division by 190 to 100. It was a case in which the feelings and sympathies of the House triumphed over the cold principles of political economy, and caused them to listen to the promptings of their hearts rather than to the dictates of their understandings. Still the progress of the measure was resisted step by step, but it was carried through all its stages unimpaired in its efficiency. The ten-hours provision was sustained in spite of the opinion expressed by Lord J. Russell, and others who, like him, were friendly to the principle of shortening the time of factory labour, that eleven hours would be a preferable arrangement. In the House of Lords the bill was brought forward by Lord Ellesmere, who urged that it was better to have "a well-fed, easy-to-do class of poor, though noisy and turbulent, than the want and squalor often seen in Salford."

When the House divided, there were found to be 53 in favour of the second reading, and 11 against it. The measure then passed without further obstruction.

When the annual educational vote, the amount of which had been gradually raised to 100,000*l.*, came before the House of Commons, great dissatisfaction was expressed, because, while Wesleyans and other dissenters were allowed to claim a share of the grant, the Roman Catholics were still excluded from all participation in it by a regulation which directed that the authorized version of the

Scriptures should be used in all the schools to which the aid of the government was extended. The regulation was condemned by men of all parties, and by none more strongly than by Sir R. Peel, but was chiefly attacked by an amendment, which was moved by Sir W. Molesworth. Lord J. Russell, however, and several of his colleagues gave such full and satisfactory assurances of their anxious desire to admit the Catholics to a share of the vote, and pledged themselves so distinctly to a speedy change of system in regard to it, that Sir W. Molesworth wished to withdraw his amendment, but was prevented from doing so by some of his supporters, who insisted on going to a division on it; when only 22 members voted for it, while 203 supported the government.

A bill was rapidly passed through parliament towards the end of the session to give effect to the recommendations of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for the foundation of a bishopric at Manchester. It provided that, in consequence of the addition thus made to the number of bishops, the junior member of the episcopal bench for the time being should not have a seat in the House of Lords. Some efforts were made to resist this innovation; and it was strongly opposed by the Bishop of Exeter, but supported by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London, and sustained by a majority in both Houses.

The remodelling of the new poor-law commission, long demanded, often promised, and as often postponed, was at length undertaken in good earnest towards the end of this session, and carried into effect.

This year witnessed the departure of one whose vices, no less than his virtues, the defects of whose character, no less than its excellent qualities, had contributed to render him greatly powerful for evil and for good in England, and still more in Ireland. On the 8th of February Daniel O'Connell addressed the House of Commons for the last time. The question on which he spoke was the Destitute Persons (Ireland) Bill. That buoyant health and vigour, which once forced a hostile and angry senate to listen to unwelcome truths, was now gone for ever; the voice which formerly shook the hall was now sunk almost to a whisper.

It was still hoped that a visit to a warmer climate, and to new and interesting scenes, might re-invigorate his shattered constitution. He therefore determined to visit the metropolis of the church of which he had been so loyal and devoted a champion. A reception, such as policy and gratitude alike dictated, was prepared for him at Rome. Already arches of triumph were being erected;

already Pius IX., then in the zenith of his fame and popularity, was preparing to testify his affection and esteem, and all Italy, nay all Europe, was impatiently expecting the tidings of the public entry of the liberator. But death interposed to prevent Rome from conferring, and O'Connell from receiving, the honours that were being prepared for him. At Genoa his illness suddenly increased, and soon terminated fatally. His heart was embalmed, and carried on to that venerable city towards which he was hastening as fast as his infirmities would permit. The body was conveyed back to Ireland, where, in spite of rivals, in spite of his failing health, in spite of the disappointment of the hopes he had held out to his countrymen, he was regarded with unimpaired affection. In Dublin the intelligence of the event was posted up at all the public offices immediately after its arrival. The bells of the Roman Catholic chapels throughout the country tolled out the sad and solemn tidings; and masses were everywhere celebrated for the repose of the soul of the illustrious deceased. Every mark of respect for his memory that could be shown was shown. On this side of the Channel the feeling excited by the intelligence was very different. Here his pertinacious demands of "justice for Ireland" had been listened to with derision. His strong zeal for Romanism had made him hateful to zealous Protestants. He was ridiculed as the "big beggar-man;" he was held up to contempt as a blustering demagogue and the mercenary agitator for a repeal which he did not really desire. But though the people of England had been somewhat severe in their estimate of him during his life, they did not forget the services he had rendered to the cause of progress and reform, especially by the part he had taken in forcing forward the great measure of Catholic emancipation. Few of them, however, appreciated at their real value the services he had rendered to his own country, and thus indirectly to ours. But while Englishmen generally were disposed to render less than justice to his memory, foreigners, and especially his co-religionists abroad, were disposed to do more. To them his virtues and his services were immensely magnified, while the defects and blemishes of his character were lost in the distance.

The body of O'Connell was interred in the cemetery of Glasnevin. It was followed to the grave by a procession of at least 50,000 persons, in which Orangemen and Ribbonmen walked side by side, while a far larger number assembled to see the remains of the great agitator borne to their last resting-place. The halt, the maimed, and the blind gathered around the coffin, in the hope that

a miraculous virtue would go forth from it to heal their infirmities. At the head of the sorrowing crowd that followed the corpse were the Lord Chancellor of Ireland, the Lord Mayor of Dublin, and a crowd of archbishops, bishops, and other dignitaries of the Roman Catholic church.

The protectionists had repeatedly asserted that the league would be continued for the agitation of ulterior objects after the great question from which it derived its name had been set at rest. The Duke of Richmond, in particular, had declared in his place in the House of Lords that the league never would be dissolved till it had destroyed the church and every institution of the country. The falsity of these predictions was speedily manifested. On the 25th of June the bill which repealed the duties on corn passed the House of Lords. On the 2nd of July the league was dissolved, with the necessary precaution of appointing a committee to call it again into existence in case any serious attempt should be made to reverse the policy of which it had secured the triumph. The good faith of the league was further manifested by the disposition it made of its remaining funds. On the day of its dissolution 10,000*l.* were voted to Mr. Wilson, its chairman, as an acknowledgment of the great services he had rendered in that capacity, and of the sacrifices of time and attention to his private affairs that he had made. It was well known that Mr. Cobden had lost at least 20,000*l.* through the manner in which his time and attention had been occupied in promoting the free-trade cause. Steps were therefore taken not only to reimburse him, but to raise such a sum as would enable him for the future to devote his great abilities to the service of his country.

This year, marked by the great economical and political events that have been narrated, was also illustrated by the accomplishment of a great scientific feat—the discovery of the planet Neptune. It had some time before been observed that the planet to which the names of Uranus, Herschel, and Georgium Sidus had been given, and which up to this time had been supposed to be the outermost planet of our system, deviated at a certain part of its orbit from the curve in which it previously moved, in a manner that led the German astronomer Bessel to conjecture, and to state in a lecture delivered at Königsberg in 1840, that these perturbations were due to the existence of a planet outside it. A long series of most difficult and laborious calculations were carried on simultaneously by two young astronomers, M. Leverrier, of Paris, and Mr. Adams, of the University of Cambridge, both of whom arrived at conclusions nearly identical with regard to the position occupied by the sup-

posed planet. Guided by the information afforded by Leverrier, M. Galle, of Berlin, succeeded in pointing his telescope on the planet on the night of the 23rd of September; and on the 1st of October Professor Challis announced that, proceeding on the calculations communicated to him by Mr. Adams, he had discerned it on the night of the 12th of August. Thus priority of discovery seems to have belonged to the English astronomer, but priority of publication to his French confrère. There can be no doubt that their merits were equal, and that each had conducted his own investigations independently of the other.

CHAPTER XI.

THE PEOPLE'S CHARTER.

WHILE the body of O'Connell was being conveyed from Genoa to its final resting-place in Ireland, the general election was taking place. The circumstances under which it occurred caused it to be carried on with unprecedented order and tranquillity. There was no "appeal to the people" on any great question of national policy. The adoption of free trade had taken away the great bone of contention; and though a more vigorous policy was anticipated from Lord J. Russell than from Lord Melbourne, it was not expected that the present government would undertake any of those great organic changes which were demanded by a considerable portion of the community, and the announcement of which would have roused the partisans of the ministry to greater enthusiasm, and prompted them to make greater exertions. On the other hand, the remnant of the conservative party, which had ranged itself under the leadership of Lord Stanley, Lord G. Bentinck, and Mr. Disraeli, had nothing to hold out to its supporters beyond vague professions of attachment to our ancient institutions. Thus, if there was little enthusiasm for the Whigs, there was less for their opponents; so that on the whole the government gained by the election. The city of London sent three liberals, first among whom was the prime minister, and one conservative, who headed his liberal opponent, Sir G. Larpent, by only three votes. The metropolitan boroughs, almost without exception, sent radical representatives. Bath rejected Roebuck; Edinburgh lost the honour of being represented by Macaulay, and sent a wealthy paper manufacturer to replace the great historian; Mr. Gladstone's seat for Oxford was strongly but unsuccessfully contested by Mr. Round, a champion of the no-papery party. Though the government could boast that it had a few more nominal supporters in the new parlia-

ment, it was doubtful whether it had gained in real strength by the dissolution, on account of the great number of independent members returned.

The new parliament was summoned to meet on the 18th of November, for two reasons:—first, because commercial distress prevailed throughout the United Kingdom to an extent that required the intervention of the legislature; and next, because the murders, robberies, and other outrages perpetrated in Ireland had become so numerous and so atrocious that the government was compelled to resort once more to parliament for additional repressive powers. The session was opened by commission; and the queen's speech indicated an intention on the part of the government to bring before the House the question of the navigation laws—a question nearly allied to that of protection, and which might therefore be expected to be decided in accordance with those free-trade principles that were now in the ascendant.

The commercial distress was the most pressing and the most important subject, and obtained the earliest attention of the House. On the 2nd of December the chancellor of the exchequer proposed the appointment of a committee to investigate its causes, and the manner in which it should be dealt with. His motion was ultimately adopted, and another committee for the same object was appointed by the Lords.

This subject having been thus disposed of for the present, the attention of the legislature was next directed to the question of the repression of crime in Ireland, in reference to which the government was placed in a very embarrassing position. Little more than a year had elapsed since they had obtained office by opposing the Arms Bill of their predecessors. They had then themselves taken up that bill, and had been obliged to abandon it, on account of the strong objections that were entertained against it by many of their own supporters; and now they found themselves once more compelled to come to parliament, and to ask it to grant them powers as least as great as those which at their instigation had been refused to their predecessors. Indeed, the state of Ireland was such that no government could possibly abstain from asking for extraordinary powers, or could honourably continue to hold office if those powers were refused. Sir. G. Grey, in introducing a measure on the subject, referred to four classes of crimes, the increase of which justified the demand which the government made: the number of homicides, which in the six months ending October 1846 was 68, in the six months ending

October 1847 was 96; the number of attempts on life by firing at the person, which in six months of 1846 was 55, was in the same six months of 1847, 126; the number of robberies of arms, which was in six months of 1846, 207, in the same six months of 1847 was 530; and the number of firings of dwellings, which in six months of 1846 was 51, was in the same six months of 1847, 116. These facts, however, were far from giving an adequate idea of the increase of those offences in districts which were now particularly infested by crime. The total number of the offences he had just mentioned amounted in the last month to 195 in the whole of Ireland; but the counties of Clare, Limerick, and Tipperary furnished 139 of them. Sir R. Peel, casting aside all personal considerations, avowed that he could not resist the appeal which Sir G. Grey had made to him and to the House in favour of the bill; and as an Irish member had urged that reparation was due to him for having been turned out of office on a coercion bill, he generously replied, "The best reparation that can be made to the last government will be to assist the present government in passing this law." This noble conduct, calculated to raise not only the estimation in which Sir R. Peel was deservedly held, but the character of British statesmanship in the eyes of both Englishmen and foreigners, no doubt influenced considerably the result of the division on the question of the introduction of the bill, which was carried by a majority of 213.

The general election brought a very important question a stage nearer to its final settlement. One of the members who had been returned with Lord J. Russell for the city of London was Baron Rothschild, a Jew by extraction and by religion. It was natural, therefore, that a premier whose name was identified with the cause of civil and religious liberty, and who had already exerted himself to obtain emancipation for the Jews, should make a fresh effort now that he was thus specially urged to it by the great constituency which he represented, and which had returned him at the head of the poll. His duty, his interest, and his convictions, all combined to lead him to support in the strongest manner the claim of his colleague to take his seat in the assembly to which the suffrages of the metropolis had sent him. He accordingly submitted to the House the following resolution: "That it is expedient to remove all civil disabilities at present affecting her majesty's subjects of the Jewish religion, with the like exceptions as are provided for her majesty's subjects professing the Roman Catholic religion." This resolution was supported not only by most of the Whig members of the House, but also by three personages whose party connections led men to

expect from them an adverse vote—Lord G. Bentinck, Mr. Gladstone, and Mr. Disraeli, the last himself belonging to the proscribed nation, and proud of his lineage. It was adopted by a majority of 67. A bill founded on the resolution was carried through the House of Commons; but, like many other measures having the same object in view, knocked in vain at the door of the House of Lords. On the 20th of December, the two Houses adjourned.

Parliament resumed its sittings on the 3rd of February, 1848. The first question that occupied the attention of the House of Commons on the resumption of its sittings was that of the condition of our West-Indian sugar-producing colonies, in which great distress prevailed, which the protectionists naturally attributed to the gradual removal of the protection which had been afforded to those colonies. Lord G. Bentinck moved for and obtained the appointment of a select committee to inquire into their present condition and prospects. The next attempt to afford them relief came from the ministerial side of the House. The chancellor of the exchequer proposed a loan of 200,000*l.*, subsequently reduced to 170,000*l.*, to be employed in promoting the immigration of free labourers into the colonies. The debate on this motion gave rise to a violent explosion of angry personalities, Lord G. Bentinck accusing Mr. Hawes, the under colonial secretary, of having suppressed an important despatch, in order to keep the House and the public in the dark with regard to the real condition of the colonies. This insinuation was repelled by Mr. Hawes with great warmth; and still more indignantly by Lord J. Russell, who followed him.

Strong personalities were bandied, until at length Mr. Hawes indulged in language which drew on him the rebuke of the Speaker, and thus put an end for the present to the dispute. On a division, the votes were—

For the government proposal	...	...	..	...	260
Against it ..	...	...	...	...	245
Majority for the government	...	...	...	...	15

Following the good example of their predecessors in office, ministers brought their financial statement before the House at the earliest possible period. But here the resemblance ended. They did not exhibit that skill and steadiness in dealing with financial questions, that complete mastery over all the details of taxation, which inspired such confidence in the guidance of Sir R. Peel.

Never, perhaps, did any budget call forth a greater amount of

adverse criticism. The free-trade party, represented by Messrs. Hume, Cobden, and Bright, loudly demanded that our expenditure should be brought down to the level of our income, at a time when the distressed state of our commerce and manufactures seemed to require considerable reductions. The protectionists exulted over the testimony afforded by this budget to the correctness of their opinions and predictions of the disastrous results of free trade. Independent members reminded Lord J. Russell of his speeches against the income tax when brought forward by Sir R. Peel, and demanded that it should be more justly distributed. One or two only faintly praised the ministerial scheme.

It soon became evident that the country would not endure the proposed increase of the income tax, and ministers wisely resolved to yield. On the 28th of February the chancellor of the exchequer announced that the government had resolved to abandon their intention of proposing an increase of the income tax, and submitted to the House the changes in the budget which this concession rendered necessary.

A long debate took place on the question raised by an amendment proposed by Mr Hume, that the income tax should be renewed for a single year. The discussion turned not only on the serious question at issue, but on the financial system introduced by Sir R. Peel, and the relative merits of direct and indirect taxation. The government resisted Mr. Hume's proposal, and urged, as an additional reason for maintaining the credit of the country at this moment, the revolution which had taken place in France, and had compelled King Louis Philippe to seek a refuge on our shores. In the course of the debate Sir R. Peel announced his intention to support ministers, and declared his unabated confidence in the system of finance which the income tax had enabled him to inaugurate, and which the present ministers were carrying out to the best of their ability under the great difficulties in which they were placed by the present distress. Their commercial and financial policy, ably vindicated by Messrs. Wilson and Gladstone, was strongly assailed by Lord G. Bentinck and Mr. Disraeli. Mr. Cobden put the argument for direct taxation with that admirable clearness and perspicuity that were characteristics of his mind. "While the House frets over its sevenpence in the pound, the poor are paying twice that number of shillings in the pound on the great staples of their consumption. For every 20s. the working classes expend on tea, they pay 10s. of duty; for every 20s. they expend on sugar, they pay 6s. of duty; for every 20s. they

expend on coffee, they pay 8s. of duty; on soap, 5s.; on beer, 4s.; on tobacco, 16s.; on spirits, 14s. When you bear in mind that the working classes expend much more income on these articles than people of our class, you cannot but see that this amounts to an income tax not of 7*l.* per pound, but sometimes of 12s., 15s., or 16s. in the pound; while men of some thousands a year expend a vast deal more in buying furniture, horses, carriages, books, and other things which pay comparatively little tax."

Mr. Cobden next dealt in the same perspicuous manner with the subject of the inequalities of the income tax, and the necessity that existed for their removal.

"Make your tax *just*," he exclaimed, "in order that it may be permanent. It is ridiculous to deny the broad distinction that exists between incomes derived from trades and professions, and those drawn from land. Take the case of a tradesman with 10,000*l.* of capital; he gets 500*l.* a year interest, and 500*l.* more for his skill and industry. Is this man's 1000*l.* a year to be mulcted in the same amount with 1000*l.* a year derived from a real property capital of 25,000*l.*? So with the cases of professional men, who literally live by the waste of their brains. The plain fair dealing of the country revolts at an equal levy on such different sorts of property. Professional men, and men in business, put in motion the wheels of the social system. It is their industry and enterprise that mainly give to realized property the value that it bears; to them therefore the State first owes sympathy and support."

Lord J. Russell admitted the inequality of the tax, but declared that it was impossible to remedy it; and maintained that the attempt to do so would render the tax far less productive and far more vexatious than it had ever been before. With regard to the proposal that the estimates should be reduced, he said that they had been framed at a time when everything appeared tranquil, but even then he felt the necessity of being prepared for any emergency that might arise; and this was much more necessary now after the extraordinary events that had occurred on the Continent. Mr. Hume's amendment was supported by 138 and opposed by 363 members.

It was not until the 25th of August that the amended financial statement of the government was brought forward. The chancellor of the exchequer then announced that, on the one hand, by reductions to the amount of 828,000*l.* that had been effected in the military, naval, and miscellaneous expenditure, and, on the other, by an increase that had taken place in various items of the ordinary revenue amounting to not less than 340,000*l.* above what Lord J.

Russell had calculated on, to which he added 80,000*l.*, the last remnant of the China money, the deficiency of the revenue had been reduced to 292,305*l.*, and he expressed a confident expectation that at the end of the financial year this deficiency would have disappeared. But the extraordinary expenses that had been incurred in the Caffre war and in other ways had raised the amount of the total deficiency to be provided for to 2,500,000*l.* The demands on the Consolidated Fund were already so great that it was undesirable to supply this deficiency from that source, and it was therefore determined to borrow 2,000,000*l.*

While these events were occurring a revolution had been effected in Paris, which had swept away the throne of Louis Philippe, and substituted for it a provisional government. This revolution had the effect almost everywhere of raising the hopes and expectations of those who desired the overthrow of existing governments, but nowhere more so than in Ireland, where the chronic discontent had been increased by suffering, and by the operation of those repressive laws to which the English government and legislature had been compelled to resort. The place which had been occupied by Mr. O'Connell was filled by Mr. Smith O'Brien, who led the discontented party with more violence, but far less tact, ability, and caution. He avowedly aimed, not only at a repeal of the legislative union between the two kingdoms, but at their entire separation; and it was quite evident that the great body of his countrymen were prepared to support his projects, and that nothing but a favourable opportunity was wanting to bring on a civil war, in which, though the mother country was sure to triumph in the end, much blood would be shed, and multitudes of the loyal people of Ireland would probably be massacred. The government, acting under the advice of the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, proposed to parliament the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act in that country. The serious character of the emergency silenced for the moment the strife of party. Lord J. Russell introduced the measure to an assembly evidently prepared to give it a very favourable reception. Mr. Feargus O'Connor, Mr. Sharman Crawford, and a few Irish members objected. Sir Lucius O'Brien, the brother of Mr. Smith O'Brien, but a man of very different political opinions, announced that he had felt it his duty to support the proposition of the government. The bill was passed without a division, and the standing orders in both Houses suspended in order that it might be passed more rapidly. It was generally felt—even by the majority of the repealers in the House of Commons—that Ireland was in danger

of being pushed into a wicked and disastrous insurrection, by men who, if against all human probability they should achieve a momentary success, were incapable of constituting a government, and very certain to bring on their unhappy country evils compared with which the sufferings she was now enduring might well be regarded as light and unimportant. Mr. O'Brien rushed into open rebellion, was taken, tried, found guilty, and transported, and so this foolish movement was crushed.

But while most of the Irish members readily acquiesced in the expediency of this precautionary measure, they demanded that it should be closely followed by remedial measures calculated to remove the sufferings under which their country laboured. These demands were strongly put forward by Mr. Sharman Crawford, who proposed a resolution to the effect that it was the duty of parliament, in the present disturbed condition of Ireland, to bring forward such measures "as may be necessary to improve the condition, redress the grievances, and establish the just rights of the Irish people." At the same time he announced that, if this motion should be carried, he intended to follow it up by proposing the resolution moved by Lord J. Russell in 1844, namely, that the whole subject of Irish grievances should be referred to a committee of the whole House. The reply of Lord J. Russell to these proposals was a cry of regretful helplessness. He deplored the rejection of an eviction of tenants bill by the House of Lords, pleaded for gradual improvements, deprecated hasty legislation, contended that the Protestants of Ireland had a right to insist on the maintenance of an established church, and dilated on the obstacles that hindered the establishment of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland. Mr. Osborne reminded the House that on that very day, forty-five years ago, the House was engaged in suspending the Habeas Corpus Act; and he bitterly complained that nothing, absolutely nothing, had been done in the interval for the pacification of Ireland.* Mr. Crawford's motion was rejected by a majority of seventy.

One cause of the distress under which Ireland almost continually laboured, and under which at this time she was suffering most intensely, was that many estates were so loaded with mortgages and other charges, that the proprietors received little or nothing from them, and had no money to spend on the improvement of their

* This was hardly the fact. The Catholic Emancipation Bill had been carried, and many other acts, which, though they had not altogether attained the desired end, had removed many of the grievances of which Irishmen generally and justly complained.

property. The government brought in an Eneumbered Estates Bill, to facilitate the sale of such properties. The bill was introduced in the first instance into the House of Lords, and went through it without any important changes, but was considerably altered in the House of Commons. On its return to the Upper House Lord Stanley moved that the amendments of the Commons should be referred to a select committee; but the majority decided to accept them, and this important bill was adopted.

The French Revolution of 1848 had sent through Europe a shock as of a republican earthquake, shaking every throne, and spreading consternation far and wide. In England the news of that event produced no commotion, but excited much uneasiness. There was, indeed, some ground for alarm. We have seen that Ireland was ready for an outbreak; and in England the chartists, who were very numerous among the working classes, would have been only too glad of an opportunity of following the example which had been set them by the French nation, by establishing a republic in England, or, at all events, by carrying out those changes in the constitution which were embodied in the document which was styled the "People's Charter." Before we proceed to relate the extent to which these fears were realized, we must sketch the history of the chartist agitation. The long, patient, though not always wise, and temperate pursuit, chiefly by the poorest of the working classes, of objects once scouted by all parties, but which have now been to a great extent attained, is a spectacle which deserves the attention of those who would fully understand the working of a constitution under which every demand that is founded on truth and justice is sure at length to obtain a respectful hearing, and an ultimate triumph.

Before the introduction of the Reform Bill, a strong and highly popular party advocated universal, or at least household suffrage, vote by ballot, and the shortening of the duration of parliaments. But the attempt to bring them forward in connection with that measure was abandoned, and its liberal character reconciled the advocates of these changes to their postponement, and induced them to join in the cry that was raised in favour of "the bill, the whole bill, and *nothing but the bill.*" But though the radical party were satisfied for the moment, they had no intention to allow the ulterior changes, on which they had all along insisted as being the necessary complements of the Reform Bill, to be altogether put aside; and, therefore, though well aware that they could not effect anything in the legislature, they began to agitate for those changes. They proposed to

confer the franchise on every adult man, though they were not yet prepared to adopt the suggestion of Coleridge, and bestow it also on unmarried women. But even if this point should be gained, there were other difficulties to be removed before their principle could have its full realization. The voter might be bribed, influenced, or intimidated into giving a vote contrary to his conviction, or not voting at all. To meet this difficulty, it was proposed that all votes should be given secretly. The voter should therefore be protected by the ballot. Again, the vote of a man who lived in a town with a population of more than 300,000 persons had evidently much less influence in the result of a contest than that of a man who inhabited a borough of only 300 or 400 inhabitants. The remedy for this anomaly was to divide the country into electoral districts nearly equal in population. It might happen also that the man whom the majority of the electors deemed best fitted to represent their views in the House of Commons, might be too poor to bear the cost of an election, or the loss and expense of a residence in London. It was therefore suggested that all members of the Lower House should be paid for the performance of their legislative duties. Lastly, the member sent to represent a district in the House of Commons might prove recreant to the pledges he had given his constituents, and might totally *m*isrepresent those who sent him thither. This difficulty it was proposed to meet by making elections annual, so that the unfaithful representative would be speedily punished, and the disappointed constituency would be able very soon to replace him by another, who would more truly represent their opinions. Considerations such as these led the members of what was called the extreme radical party to advocate universal or rather manhood suffrage, vote by ballot, equal electoral districts, annual parliaments, and the payment of members of the House of Commons. To the argument that the people were not sufficiently educated to make a wise and proper use of the privileges which the adoption of this plan would bestow on them, it was answered that the people never would be educated until they obtained the power of voting for representatives in parliament.

No sooner was the reform struggle concluded than these views became prominent, and almost all men hoped or feared, according to the character of their political views, that they would soon be carried out. Several representatives of these opinions were elected members of the first reformed parliament; but their numbers in that assembly were by no means in proportion to the numbers of those by whom these views were supported in the country. They

were, however, advocated by many persons of great intelligence and natural eloquence, and by the *élite* of the working classes, especially in the manufacturing districts. These were the leaders of the movement; while the rank and file was chiefly composed of those who were disappointed in the extravagant expectations they had formed of the benefits which would flow from the Reform Bill, and especially of those whose incurable habits of indolence had been severely but vainly disciplined by the operation of the new poor-law. Out of these heterogeneous elements, two classes of Chartists, as we may now begin to call them, were gradually formed: the first composed of the more educated, who hoped to attain their ends by legal and constitutional means; the second, which was prepared to have recourse to insurrection and revolution. The former came afterwards to be styled Moral-force Chartists, and the latter were known as Physical-force Chartists; and as in every great movement of this kind the most violent language and the strongest measures are sure to be the most popular, the advocates of physical force were the most loudly applauded, and could boast of having the most numerous, if not the most intelligent and influential, following.

Proposals for the purpose of realizing some portions of the chartist programme had been brought before parliament with no other result than that of occupying to very little purpose the attention of the House of Commons. There was, however, one motion which deserves especial mention on account of its connection with the chartist agitation. At the meeting of parliament in the commencement of the year 1838, the question of the adoption of the ballot, and the shortening of the duration of parliaments, was raised by an amendment to the address on the queen's speech, proposed by Mr. Duncombe, member for Finsbury, and seconded by Sir W. Molesworth, but strongly opposed by Lord J. Russell.

When the House divided, only twenty members voted for Mr. Duncombe's amendment, and this of course settled the question so far as the House of Commons was concerned. But the matter was not allowed to stop there. Six of these members were invited to confer with a deputation of six working men from a society which had been formed a short time before and had taken the name of the "Working Men's Association." The result of this consultation was a document drawn up in the shape of a parliamentary bill, to which was given the title of the "People's Charter." It contained the six points already mentioned: 1. universal—or, as it is now more correctly designated, manhood suffrage; 2. annual parliaments; 3. vote by ballot; 4. abolition of the property qualification then required

for members of the House of Commons; 5. the payment of members; 6. equal electoral districts. The obvious effect of this plan would be to give every man a vote; to make the representative constantly responsible to his constituents; to protect the voter from intimidation or corruption; to give to the inhabitants of each electoral district the freest and most unconstrained choice of their representative by removing all obstacles likely to prevent the object of their choice from accepting the task confided to him; and lastly, to make the votes of all men throughout the kingdom as nearly equipollent as possible. The charter certainly possessed the merit of embodying in a perfect logical and coherent manner the wishes and ideas of the most numerous and extreme portion of the radical party. At the conclusions of the deliberations which had led to its adoption, O'Connell, on behalf of his fellow-members, handed it to the secretary of the Working Men's Association, saying, "There, Lovett, is your charter. Agitate for it, and never be content with anything less." This document was subsequently submitted to several public meetings, by which it was enthusiastically approved.

Armed with the document which these meetings had sanctioned, the Working Men's Association lost no time in acting on the advice which O'Connell had given to their secretary. The principal agent in this work was Henry Hetherington. He was a man of solid rather than showy abilities, more logical than eloquent, but gifted with indomitable energy, courage, and perseverance. With him were associated Henry Vincent—the Demosthenes of the new movement—Lovett, the secretary of the association, and several other men of considerable natural parts, though generally ill-educated. They have often been represented as mere mercenary traders in agitation, who aimed at leading the working classes to seek their elevation rather from political changes than from honest labour. Nothing can be more false or unjust than these imputations. That there were among the chartists men who were actuated by low and sordid motives, there can be no doubt; but the leaders whose names we have mentioned, and most of those who were associated with them, were thoroughly honest enthusiasts, who earnestly at least, if not wisely, advocated the social elevation of the working classes. The spirit which pervaded both the leaders and the great mass of their followers in this agitation was well expressed by the following sentence printed at the bottom of the cards of membership of the association: "The man who evades his share of useful labour diminishes the public stock of wealth, and throws his own burden on his neighbour."

The lead in the new agitation, however, speedily devolved on Feargus O'Connor, who became at once the soul and the bane of it. He was originally an Irish barrister, and claimed descent from the ancient kings of Ireland. In 1831 he was employed as an agent to promote the return to the House of Commons of followers of O'Connell. His frame was herculean, his bearing aristocratic and commanding; he was endowed with great natural eloquence, and had an earnest and enthusiastic zeal for the cause, which he served to the very best of his ability with tongue, pen, and fist. His legal knowledge, though by no means profound, was of considerable service to a party very destitute of that qualification. He quickly became a prominent man, was warmly patronized by O'Connell, to whom he rendered very important services; and in 1833 successfully contested the county of Cork, but lost his seat for want of qualification. He then quarrelled with O'Connell, and, finding his political career in Ireland thus closed, threw himself into the chartist agitation, and speedily took the lead in it. There can be no doubt that he was thoroughly honest, and animated with a hearty desire to benefit the working classes, but he was intensely fond of power and popularity, and could bear no rival near his throne. The consequence was that the interests of the agitation were often sacrificed to his petty jealousies, and that he alternately praised and abused, caressed and attacked, encouraged and thwarted, almost every man who took a prominent part in the chartist agitation. Thus, though his adhesion to it was the means of imparting to it a certain degree of respectability, and though at first he rendered it valuable services, it cannot be denied that one chief reason of its ultimate and signal failure was that he sacrificed the cause he had espoused to his desire to retain the leadership of the movement.

The promulgation of the charter soon brought under one banner the scattered hosts who were before agitating in a desultory and isolated manner in support of the views of the radical party. Nothing showed this more clearly than the number of periodicals which the publication of the charter brought into existence, and the large circulation they enjoyed during the prosperous days of the chartist agitation. London produced its *Dispatch*, Edinburgh its *True Scotsman*, Newcastle its *Northern Liberator*, Birmingham its *Journal*. To these may be added the *Operative*, edited by Bronterro O'Brien, who afterwards became the rival of O'Connor; the *Charter* and the *Champion*, which represented the opinions of Cobbett. Many other periodicals came into existence afterwards, among which we need only specify the *Chartist Circular*, price one halfpenny,

which had a very extended circulation. But they were all far surpassed in popularity, if not in the ability with which they were conducted, by the *Northern Star*, the property and the organ of Feargus O'Connor. The feeling in favour of the charter was farther manifested by the number and enthusiasm of those who attended the public meetings that were held in connection with it. The vast multitudes that were present at them, the excitement and ardour that attended them, often caused the military to be ordered out when they were held, though their active intervention was rarely needed. It would be an endless and wearisome task to attempt to enumerate these assemblages. It is sufficient to say that they were held in all parts of the kingdom, and often repeatedly in the same town or neighbourhood; sometimes in rooms, sometimes in the open air, sometimes on moors, to which people flocked from considerable distances. As the agitation proceeded, it gradually brought into greater and greater prominence the difference that existed between the moral and physical force parties. These two divisions of the chartist body were soon openly at variance, and the breach gradually widened, producing first estrangement, then hostility; the most violent party gradually assuming the direction of the whole movement, in spite of the protests of the ablest and most moderate of the chartists. As for O'Connor, he oscillated between them. He was by no means deficient in courage, and would probably have had no objection to attain his ends by a successful insurrection; but he must have been well aware of the responsibility that would have devolved on himself if such a movement had taken place, and the absolute impossibility of success. He knew, too, that if physical force should be resorted to, he must either take the lead in the matter, or abdicate in favour of those who were prepared to do so. His opinions were those of the moral-force chartists, and he endeavoured to maintain his authority over them by the frequent use of language such as he knew they would approve; but, seeing that by casting his lot with them he would alienate the others, he also gave the physical force majority some encouragement, without absolutely committing himself to their views, and thus he was occasionally led to employ violent language and to encourage hopes that he must have well known could not be fulfilled.

Thus chartism held its way, big, menacing, and thunderous, in times of distress, but shrinking into comparative insignificance under the sunshine of general prosperity.

The revolution of February 24th, 1848, in France—followed by

a momentary triumph of republican principles in that country—gave an immediate and enormous impulse to the chartist agitation in England, and the more so because it occurred at a time when the working classes here were in a state of great suffering. The chartist leaders did their utmost to increase the excitement. Numerous meetings were held in all parts of the country, and the most intemperate language and the strongest incitements to insurrection were received with enthusiastic shouts, while the speakers who counselled prudence and moderation could not obtain a hearing. The establishment of a republic in France was continually referred to, accompanied by declaration that the people would have either the charter or a republic in England. A new convention, assembled on the 6th of April, resolved on the preparation of another petition for presentation to the House of Commons, which it was hoped would greatly surpass all previous petitions in the number of signatures attached to it; and a monster meeting was held at Kennington-common, whence the petition should be carried to the House of Commons, followed by a procession in which it was calculated that half a million of persons would take part. This project excited general alarm. In fact, many chartists dreamed of effecting a revolution like that which had been made in the neighbouring country. The procession was decided to be illegal, and a proclamation was issued warning all persons not to take part in it. The convention therefore determined to hold the meeting, but were silent with regard to the procession, which many of their body still wished to carry out in spite of the prohibition of the government. London waited the issue in anxious suspense. The preparations made to meet the danger showed the alarm that was felt. The police force was greatly strengthened. A large number of special constables—amounting, as was said, to 170,000—were sworn in. Among them was Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, who soon after became President of the French Republic, and then Emperor of the French. Two thousand stand of arms were supplied to the officials of the General Post-office. The Admiralty was garrisoned by a band of marines. The Tower guns were mounted, and its defences strengthened and repaired. The Bank was supplied with artillery and filled with soldiers; its windows were defended by strong timbers, and sand-bag parapets were raised on its roof. The ships were placed under the surveillance of the police, in case any of the sailors should manifest a disposition to join in the anticipated insurrection. No public vehicles were allowed to pass along the streets, lest they should be employed in

the construction of barricades. The military arrangements were intrusted to the Duke of Wellington, who concealed his troops in places at which an attack might be expected, but especially in the neighbourhood of the different bridges, in case the threatened procession should attempt to cross any of them. In this state of defence and preparation London waited the result of the meeting. It was holden, as was announced, on Kennington-common. But instead of the promised half million, only about thirty thousand appeared on the ground. Mr. Mayne, the head of the police, told Mr. O'Connor that the meeting might be held, but that the procession would be stopped, and that if any conflict took place between the multitude and the authorities, they would hold him responsible for the consequences. Accordingly, O'Connor put forth all his power of persuasion to induce those who attended the meeting, to abstain from any procession. This advice was followed. No disturbance took place which the police were not easily able to quell, and the tranquillity of the metropolis was not disturbed. The petition was presented by Mr. O'Connor, who asserted that it had received 5,700,000 signatures. It was referred to the committee on public petitions, who employed thirteen law-stationers' clerks to make a careful examination of it. The result of their inquiry was reported to the House by Mr. Thornley, the chairman of the committee. He stated that the whole number of signatures attached to the petition was 1,975,469. Of these, many were evidently fictitious, such as Victoria Rex, Prince Albert, the Duke of Wellington, Sir R. Peel, Lord J. Russell, Colonel Sibthorp, Nocheese, Pugnose, Flatnose, Punch, etc., etc. He added that whole sheets of signatures were in the same handwriting. Another member of the committee informed the House that eight per cent. of the signatures were those of women.

These failures and these revelations were fatal to chartism. From being an object of terror, it suddenly became an object of contempt. Henceforward all was discontent, dissension, crimination, and recrimination. Attempts made by O'Brien, Vincent, and others to resuscitate the movement were utterly unsuccessful. Many of the leaders emigrated; others found employment as editors of newspapers, agents for insurance companies, etc. O'Connor, after having vehemently denounced all attempts to unite with middle-class reformers, joined and supported with all his power the household-suffrage association. But his support was now of little value to any cause. He was the wreck of what he had been, and soon after became an inmate of a lunatic asylum. Chartism was dying;

or rather let us say, the soul that once animated it and rendered it so formidable was transmigrating into a fresh body. We shall meet it again in a new shape and under very changed conditions. The miserable termination of the great Kennington-common meeting, the ridicule with which the revelations of the petition committee had covered the monster petition, the signal failure of O'Connor's land-scheme—were the most noticeable, but by no means the only causes of the wreck of chartism. The alleviation of distress which followed the adoption of free trade relaxed the sinews of agitation. The operation of the new poor-law was now telling on that great incubus of pauperism which had pressed and weighed down the industry of the country. The rapid spread and amazing success of the co-operative movement turned the attention of the working classes to a surer means of moral, intellectual, and social elevation than could be looked for from political agitation, and promised soon to give them a power that would enable them to assert their rights with irresistible force. To all these causes must be added the impulse given to the progress and prosperity of the nation by the wise legislation which the great bill of 1832 had inaugurated.

The state of Ireland at this period excited great and not unfounded alarm. Mr. Smith O'Brien and his principal associates openly avowed that they aimed at the establishment of a republic in Ireland, under the protection of the new French government, and they were evidently preparing to avail themselves of the first favourable opportunity of taking up arms to effect this object. Ministers therefore brought into the House of Commons a bill for the purpose of effectually repressing the seditious and treasonable objects of the discontented party, some of the leaders of which had accompanied Mr. Smith O'Brien to Paris, and boasted that they would be assisted in the accomplishment of their designs by a French army of 50,000 men. The chief proviso of the ministerial measure was embodied in a clause which punished with transportation persons "conspiring, imagining, or levying war against her majesty, and inciting and stirring up foreigners to invade these realms by publishing or printing any writings, or by open and advised speaking." Strong objections were urged against this provision of the bill, and especially against those words of it which referred to open and advised speaking. In the course of the debate Mr. S. O'Brien, having now returned from his visit to Paris, spoke for the last time in the House of Commons, and met with a reception from that assembly which can only be compared to that given to Catiline by the Roman Senate after his designs against the city had

been unmasked by Cicero. The bill went through the House of Commons by overwhelming majorities, and was speedily passed by the Lords without change or opposition.

Another precautionary measure introduced in the course of this session was a bill for the registration of aliens. It did not pass the House of Commons without some opposition, especially from Sir W. Molesworth, who reminded the House that Lord John Russell delivered his maiden speech against a bill which agreed almost word for word with that which was now being introduced by the government of which he was the head; that in 1824 he had again opposed it, being teller with Lord Denman against it; and that (alas for human sagacity and forethought!) he had on the last occasion on which it was brought forward expressed a hope that he should never again be obliged to raise his voice against it. Sir William added that he would not, because he had confidence in the ministry now in office, consent to give them powers which every person on their side of the House would have refused to Sir R. Peel. The opposition offered to the measure did not, however, prevent it from passing.

The frequent returns of cholera, typhus, and other forms of zymotic disease, which had hitherto been ascribed to the "visitation of God," were now beginning to be seen to be more or less traceable to exposure to a vitiated and polluted atmosphere; and the general attention of enlightened men began to be drawn to the necessity that existed for sanitary reforms. But the nation was not yet sufficiently awakened to the pressing importance of providing against the recurrence of those terrible pestilences by which many parts of the country had from time to time been ravaged. A commission, appointed in the first instance to inquire into the sanitary state of the metropolis, where the condensation of a vast population produced all kinds of nuisances injurious to health, and conditions of the water and the atmosphere pregnant with danger to those who inhabited its more crowded districts, soon extended its inquiries to the general sanitary condition of the labouring classes of the community in all parts of the kingdom, and led to the preparation and presentation of a report, drawn up by Mr. Chadwick, with the aid of Dr. Southwood Smith.

In the year 1847 another commission was appointed. It issued two reports. Several very useful acts were suggested by the commission, the most important of which were the Towns Improvement Act of 1847, the Public Health, the Nuisances Removal, and the Metropolitan Sewers Acts of 1848, the Metropolitan Inter-

ment Act of 1850, and the extension of that act to the whole of the kingdom in 1852; and this has been followed by a host of sanitary acts down to the present time, the most noteworthy of which, because it embodied the principles on which all those that followed it have been based, was the Public Health Act, passed in 1848. Under it a general board of health was appointed, the members of which were Lord Carlisle, Lord Ashley, Mr. E. Chadwick, and Dr. Southwood Smith. This measure, one of the most important for the great mass of the labouring population of this country ever adopted by the legislature, passed almost without notice, the popular indifference with regard to it contrasting in a very striking manner with the eagerness with which debates involving a change of the *personnel* of the government were devoured. :

The year 1848 closed with brighter prospects. The revolutionary tornado which had swept over the Continent was subsiding. Ireland, though not pacified, was strongly held down. O'Brien, McManus, O'Donoghue, and Meagher, the leaders of the malcontents in that country, were lying under sentence of death; and though it was not the intention of the government to carry that sentence into effect, they were destined to be banished for life. The potato-disease still raged; but the now Irish poor-law, wholesale emigration, private benevolence, and public liberality, were gradually alleviating the distress that it caused, and there was now reason to hope that this terrible visitation would ultimately regenerate that unhappy country by substituting a more nutritious food for the vegetable that had hitherto been the staff of life to the Irish peasant, and which, always insufficient, was now shown to be quite unreliable. Meanwhile, England was slowly recovering from the crisis of distress through which she too had passed, and there seemed to be good ground for hoping that she would at length realize the advantages of those free-trade measures which up to this time had never had fair play.

In the course of the autumn of this year occurred the sudden and melancholy death of a man who had rapidly risen to a very conspicuous position. Up to the time when Sir R. Peel broke up the conservative party by avowing himself convinced of the necessity of a repeal of the corn-laws, Lord G. Bentinck had been chiefly known as a great patron of the turf, one who spent his days in fox-hunting, and his nights in the House of Commons, where he sat on the back benches, his scarlet hunting-coat covered by a light paletot, silent but attentive. He was the nephew of Mr. Cannin-

and had acted as his secretary. He gave to the Whigs a very independent support while the Reform Bill was under discussion, but withdrew it after the passing of that measure. He then joined the conservative party, and was offered a post in Sir R. Peel's ministry, which he declined from a disinclination to undertake the labours and responsibilities of office. At length, when the protectionists, abandoned by their old leaders, found themselves left alone, he was put at the head of the newly formed party; and, though a very hesitating and embarrassed speaker, he accepted the position, devoted himself to politics, sold off his stud, and withdrew himself almost entirely from all participation in those amusements to which he had hitherto been so much addicted. It is probable that this sudden adoption of sedentary habits by one who had long been accustomed to violent exercise and to spending the greater part of the day in the open air, had seriously though imperceptibly injured his constitution. However, the mischief seems not to have shown itself in any way until the 21st of September in this year. On that day he appeared at the breakfast-table in more than usual spirits, and occupied himself with writing letters till about twenty minutes past four in the afternoon, when he set out with the intention of walking to Thoresby, the seat of Lord Manvers, where he had arranged to spend two days. He never reached the house. A search was made for him, and he was found lying on his face, quite dead. His death was found on examination to have been caused by a spasm of the heart, probably brought on by over-exertion and the want of sufficient food, as he had taken nothing since breakfast. His frank and open bearing, his honourable character, his undoubted sincerity, the generous warmth of his disposition, had made him a favourite with men of all parties, and caused the tidings of his death to be received with general regret. To his political friends the loss was very serious; for though there were among them men of more shining abilities and of equal application, yet his long parliamentary experience and aristocratic connections gave him an authority among them which would not have been readily accorded to any other leader.

The session of 1849 was opened on the 2nd of February. The address in reply to the speech from the throne was discussed in both Houses at great length. In the Upper House an amendment, moved by Lord Stanley, was opposed by the Duke of Wellington, and rejected by a majority of only two. The debates in the House of Commons turned chiefly on foreign affairs; amendments were proposed but ultimately withdrawn.

The question of the Navigation Laws was brought forward at the commencement of this session, with a fair prospect of being settled. The system with which the government proposed to deal dated from the year 1651, when the Protector's parliament, in order to restrain the growing competition of the Dutch, passed an act prohibiting the importation into the United Kingdom and its dependencies of any goods the produce of Asia, Africa, or America, except from the places of their production, and in ships "of which British subjects should be the proprietors and right owners, and whereof the master and three-fourths at least of the mariners should be English subjects." The act also prohibited the introduction of goods the growth, production, or manufacture of Europe, except in British ships, or ships that belonged to the country where the goods were produced, or from which they could only be, or usually had been, imported. The stringency of this law was slightly mitigated by another act passed in the reign of Charles II.; but the modifications it introduced were of little importance. A farther relaxation, made at the conclusion of the War of Independence, allowed the produce of the United States to be imported in ships belonging to citizens of those States. The last amendment of the original law was obtained in the year 1825 by Mr. Huskisson. The law, then, which the legislature had to reconsider in the year 1849 stood thus: the produce of Asia, Africa, and America might be imported from places out of Europe into the United Kingdom, if to be used therein, in foreign as well as in British ships, provided that such ships were the ships of the country of which the goods were the produce, and from which they were imported. Goods which were the produce of Europe, and which were not enumerated in the act, might be brought thence in the ships of any country. Goods sent to or from the United Kingdom to any of its possessions, or from one colony to another, must be carried in British ships, or in ships of the country in which they were produced and from which they were imported. Then followed some stringent definitions of the conditions which constituted a vessel a British ship in the sense of the act. These restrictions were not without their defenders. Even the great founder of economic science, Adam Smith, while admitting the navigation laws to be inconsistent with that perfect freedom of trade which he contended for, sanctioned their continuance on the ground that defence is much more important than opulence. But it was coming to be more and more strongly felt that these laws were part and parcel of that baneful system of monopoly which, under the name of protection, had so long been

maintained and was now so completely exploded; it began also to be seriously doubted whether they were necessary to the defence of the nation, and whether its security would not rather be increased than diminished by their entire abolition. These views, as we have seen, had already been pressed on the legislature, and the government had taken the matter up, and brought forward a measure on the subject which had been withdrawn in the last session. Therefore, on the 14th of February in this year, the president of the board of trade proposed a resolution on the subject couched in the following terms:—

“That it is expedient to remove the restrictions which prevent the free carriage of goods by sea to and from the United Kingdom and the British possessions abroad, and to amend the laws regulating the coasting trade of the United Kingdom, subject nevertheless to such control by her majesty in council as may be necessary; and also to amend the laws for the registration of ships and seamen.” A long debate took place on the question of the second reading of the measure founded on this resolution, which was strenuously supported by Sir J. Graham, and opposed by the protectionists. 214 members followed Mr. Disraeli into the lobby, while 275 voted with the government, which therefore had a majority of 61.

In the Upper House Lord Brougham astonished friend and foe by coming forward as the strenuous and uncompromising opponent of the ministerial measure, vehemently affirming, and endeavouring to show, that the question of the navigation laws had nothing to do with the question of free trade. However, the second reading was carried by a majority of 10. The smallness of this majority caused some anxiety to the supporters of the measure with regard to its ultimate fate; but this anxiety was relieved by the withdrawal of the most conspicuous opponents of the bill, which consequently passed without farther opposition. A rider proposed by the Bishop of Oxford, designed to withhold the benefit of the act from Spain and Brazil until the governments of those countries had given full assurances that they would carry out the treaties into which they had entered for the suppression of the slave-trade, was rejected.

The policy of the new conservative party was announced to the House in a resolution proposed by Mr. Disraeli on the 8th of March. Although he and his friends had frequently declared that the free-trade measures had completely failed, and must soon be abandoned, they did not venture to bring forward any proposal for a return to the system of protection, but endeavoured to make out,

on behalf of the landed interest, a plausible claim for relief from some of its peculiar burdens. The resolution stated the case of the agriculturists so ably and fully, that it well deserves perusal:—

“That the whole of the local taxation of the country for national purposes falls mainly, if not exclusively, on real property, and bears with undue severity on the occupiers of land, in a manner injurious to the agricultural interests of the country, and otherwise highly impolitic and unjust. That the hardship of this apportionment is greatly aggravated by the fact that more than one-third of the whole revenue derived from the excise is levied upon agricultural produce, exposed by the recent changes of the law to direct competition with the untaxed produce of foreign countries; the home producer being thus subject to a burden of taxation which, by greatly enhancing the price, limits the demand for British produce, and to restrictions which injuriously interfere with the conduct of his trade and industry. That this House will resolve itself into a committee to take into its serious consideration such measures as may remove the grievances of which the owners and occupiers of real property thus justly complain, and which may establish a more equitable apportionment of the public burdens.”

Mr. Hume proposed an amendment, to the effect that the public expenditure ought to be reduced to such an extent as to permit the repeal of the duties on malt and hops; thus outbidding the farmers' friends themselves. Other speakers showed that the plan proposed by Mr. Disraeli was better calculated to benefit the landlord than the tenant farmer, who, instead of gaining by it, would be loaded with his share of the additional income tax, which must necessarily be imposed in order to enable the country to meet the additional expenditure which this plan would throw on it. The motion and the amendment were both rejected.

Meanwhile Ireland and its affairs were still pressing themselves on the attention of parliament with an urgency that would not be overlooked. The scarcity still continued. The potato disease, which at one time seemed to be abating, now raged with renewed virulence. Crime was as rife as ever. Open insurrection had indeed been put down, but secret disaffection still prevailed very widely. It therefore became the imperative duty of the government to propose that the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act should be renewed; and their recommendation was backed in both Houses by large majorities, though strenuously opposed by a small but determined band of repealers. The act of repression was properly accompanied by acts of grace and liberality. A grant of

50,000*l.* was voted for the relief of those who were suffering from the famine. A select committee was appointed by each House of Parliament to inquire into the working of the new Irish poor-law. This was followed by a proposal, emanating from the government, for a rate in aid of the suffering districts, to be levied throughout Ireland; and after long debates and close divisions the plan was adopted. It was succeeded by another government proposal for a loan of 100,000*l.* on the security of the rate. This was also adopted, though it encountered strong opposition. Another Encumbered Estates Bill was brought in. At one time it seemed likely that the measure would be lost, owing to the lords having introduced into it amendments which raised a question of privilege between the two Houses; but the amendments were ultimately accepted, and the bill passed. Measures allowing advances of public money for drainage and other improvements, and for the encouragement of emigration, were also passed.

While the affairs of Ireland occupied so large a share of the attention of the British legislature and people, the colonies obtained an almost equal portion of it. The ignorance and consequent indifference that prevailed respecting them were being rapidly dispelled by the spread of education, and by the diffusion of information relating to them. The interest in them thus awakened was increased by the large amount of emigration to them from all parts of the United Kingdom, but especially from Ireland, and by the discussions which had from time to time been raised in parliament on the advantages of emigration as a means of relieving distress. We may therefore date from this year the serious commencement of an agitation carried on in and out of parliament with the object of improving the system of colonial government; in furtherance of which three colonial questions were formally brought under the notice of the legislature during this session, and gave rise to long and important debates.

We have already referred to the distracted state of the Continent, produced by the revolution that had so suddenly precipitated Louis Philippe from the throne of France. The condition of affairs to which that event had given birth continued to prevail. Under the influence of the passions it had produced, Charles Albert, king of Sardinia, who had put himself at the head of the party of Italian independence, and attempted to liberate Italy from the control of the Austrians, had been defeated in a succession of battles by Marshal Radetzky, and compelled to abdicate. The Pope, whose capital was in the hands of the republican party, escaped in

disguise to Naples, but was restored by a French army commanded by General Oudinot, which had besieged and taken Rome, and placed there a large French garrison. Sicily had revolted from the king of Naples, and the insurrectionary government which was established in that island had been supplied with arms manufactured for our army, with the consent of the Ordnance and the Foreign Office. Hungary, in revolt against Austria, was demanding the restitution of its ancient privileges. In all these cases our government thought itself bound to interfere with advice—which generally was not heeded—and sometimes, as we have just seen in regard to the Sicilian revolt, with something more than advice. These things, though occupying a large share of the attention of the legislature, only awakened a very languid interest in England, where the excitement produced by the tidings of the French Revolution had entirely subsided.

The disturbed state of the Continent might seem to afford a reason for making reductions in our naval and military expenditure. Our nearest neighbour, France, was evidently far too much engaged with her own internal troubles to think of attacking us; and so, too, were the other Great Powers of Europe, all of which had been more or less shaken by the revolutionary earthquake which had overturned the throne of Louis Philippe. In England the prevailing feeling of contentment with the national institutions had hardly been ruffled. These circumstances seemed to many to afford a favourable opportunity for reducing our military and naval expenditure. Accordingly, that party which had compelled the leader of the protectionists to concede free trade, which had supported the multitudinous improvements that had been made in our fiscal and financial arrangements, came forward, under the leadership of Mr. Cobden, to ask for a reduction of our military and naval establishments, and a corresponding diminution of that load of taxation which was doubly oppressive at a moment when the effects of the potato-rot were still felt, and the long-continued commercial distress still unremoved. On the 26th of February, when the House was about to go into committee of supply, Mr. Cobden proposed that the expenditure of the country should be reduced as soon as possible to that which in 1835 had been found sufficient to maintain the security, honour, and dignity of the nation; in other words, to the extent of nearly ten millions sterling. The chancellor of the exchequer met this motion by arguing that the expenditure of 1835 fell short of the requirements of the

country, and that many changes had occurred, especially in the colonies, which necessitated an increased expenditure. At the same time he admitted that our prospects of internal and external peace in this year were much more promising than they had been in 1848; and therefore he contemplated a reduction of forces to the extent of 10,000 men, and of expenditure to the amount of about a million and a half of money, and, as a result of these reductions, a diminution of the deficiency to 269,378*l*. The government was supported by the protectionist party in its resistance of Mr. Cobden's motion, which was rejected by the large majority of 197.

The budget, though frequently asked for, was not brought forward till the 29th of June. The chancellor of the exchequer announced that, though there was an actual deficiency of 269,378*l*., this arose from some items of expenditure which he had not anticipated—for Irish distress, emigration to Canada, and excess of naval expenditure in preceding years. He calculated that, deducting the excess of previous years from the current expenditure, the surplus of receipt over expenditure would amount to 739,936*l*. in the year 1849-50.

Mr. Hume complained of the steady rise of taxation, and of the amount of the burdens which had been imposed on the country since 1824. To show the possibility of such reductions as he advocated, he instanced the salary of the governor of Sierra Leone, amounting to 7000*l*., by the reduction of which the House would be enabled to repeal the tax on books. They might also transfer the duties of the ordnance to the war department, and thus save 250,000*l*. a year. He held up to the present government the example afforded them by Sir J. Graham, who had reduced the expenses of the admiralty by 1,200,000*l*. Mr. Milner Gibson recommended the remission of the penny-stamp duty on newspapers, of the excise duty on paper, and the advertisement duty. The claims of hops, malt, bricks, soap, tea, timber, to remission of the duties imposed on them were urged by speakers who took part in the discussion that followed the introduction of the budget. On the 20th of July Mr. Herries proposed the imposition of a small fixed duty on corn, for revenue only, which, as he tried to show, would yield a considerable income to the country, without enhancing the price of corn, and that the tax would really be paid by the foreigner. This assertion was briefly but completely disposed of by Mr. Bright, who showed that the contraction of the circle would diminish the source of supply, and raise the price of corn in the ratio of the duty.

A bankruptcy bill proposed by Lord Brougham, and some other legal reforms of less importance introduced by the attorney-general, completed the public legislative work of the session. On the 2nd of July Mr. Disraeli moved for a select committee to inquire into the state of the nation. He arraigned the whole policy of the government, but he more especially assailed its free-trade principles. Sir Robert Peel again came to the assistance of the government, defending the policy which had been impugned by the leader of the opposition, and showing that free trade not only had not caused any of the evils so much complained of, but had greatly mitigated them. He maintained that by the policy adopted in 1842 the legislature had gained the confidence and the good-will of powerful classes, and this country had been enabled to pass uninjured through a storm which convulsed other nations. The House divided on Mr. Disraeli's motion, which was rejected by a majority of 140; a very distinct manifestation of the continued confidence of the House in those free-trade measures which Sir R. Peel had induced it to adopt, and which the present government was gradually applying and further developing. The business of the session being disposed of, parliament was prorogued on the 1st of August.

CHAPTER XII.

THE GREAT EXHIBITION.

THUS far the free-trade measures of Sir R. Peel had hardly enjoyed a fair trial. The badness of the harvest; the failure of the potato-crop; the consequent derangement and stagnation of business; the distress which affected every class and every trade, prevented the beneficial working of the recently inaugurated system from being perceived. Its advocates were forced to admit their disappointment, but they alleged that the distress would have been ten times greater, and the Irish famine ten times more desolating, if the system of protection had been maintained. On the other hand, the upholders of that policy warmly contended that the distress was due to the abandonment of it; that it was precisely what they predicted; and that it would continue and increase until the old system was restored. Meanwhile most of the farmers, without being able to discover the causes of their suffering, felt that they were worse off than before, and saw in the calamities that had come upon them a fulfilment of the predictions with which they had been so plentifully plied during the period of the anti-corn-law agitation by the self-styled farmers' friends. They were therefore more than ever attached to that protective policy, to the withdrawal of which they imputed their present condition. Such was the state of feeling and opinion in the country when parliament assembled on the 31st of January, 1850. Amendments to the address were moved, but were negatived in the Upper House by a majority of 49, and in the Lower House by a majority of 119.

Mr. Disraeli asked for a committee of inquiry, which he hoped would recommend the transfer of a portion of the expenses which had hitherto been defrayed out of the rates, to the general taxation of the country. Sir J. Graham and Sir J. Grey argued against his proposals, on the ground of justice to the other classes of the

community, and Mr. Gladstone supported them on the ground of justice to the agriculturist. Sir J. Graham maintained that the proposed measure would only benefit landowners; Mr. Gladstone contended that the farmer and the yeoman would reap the chief advantage from the change. After some other speakers had delivered their opinions on the question, Sir R. Peel addressed the House in a speech in which he now for the last time delivered his deliberate opinions. The argument that the landowners were entitled to peculiar protection because they were subject to peculiar burdens had been his favourite argument, and he had based on it his justification of the monopoly which they enjoyed, and which he at one period had so strenuously defended.

After praising the ability and moderation that Mr. Disraeli had displayed in bringing forward this motion, in a manner which, considering the terms in which that gentleman had denounced and opposed him on former occasions, was honourable to both parties, he condemned the proposal to transfer 2,000,000*l.* of taxation to the Consolidated Fund, as the first of a series of measures which would appropriate the surplus of this and succeeding years. "What," he asked, "will be the effect of this scheme on the finances of the country? It will proclude legislation for the remission of taxes affecting the industry and the comforts of the people; it will either compel the continuance of the income tax, or the imposition of a duty on every foreign product in order to maintain public credit. And is the measure really for the benefit of the agricultural class itself? The proposed transfer of 2,000,000*l.* of rates to the exchequer would relieve the land only of 900,000*l.*, the remaining 1,100,000*l.* being now borne by other descriptions of real property. Yet all must be made up by the occupying tenant (in common with other classes), who would not gain a greater remission than three-pence or fourpence in the pound."

He then went on to object to the motion, on the ground that it endangered a reversal of the successful commercial policy which had been carried out during the last six years.

When the division took place the numbers were—

For Mr. Disraeli's motion	...	...	...	...	252
Against it	...	...	...	...	273
Majority against the motion	...	...	...	...	21

The smallness of this majority was a matter of great triumph to the protectionists, who had never before mustered so large a

number on any division, and who, from being a concourse of isolated individualities, were now becoming a great, organized, and formidable power.

The great change that had been made in the navigation laws had necessarily been followed by a great change in the relations between the mother country and her colonies, and had even caused the question to be raised, whether it was for her advantage to retain them at all. The government, though not prepared to go to these lengths, had come to the conclusion that it was absolutely necessary that many of them should be allowed more control over their own affairs, and a more popular form of government than they had hitherto enjoyed. A Colonial Reform Association had been formed and had diffused much information, which had considerably influenced public opinion in favour of the changes it advocated. A bill introduced by the government for the purpose of giving more popular institutions to our Australian colonies, raised the whole question of colonial reform. Sir W. Molesworth and Mr. Gladstone made great but ineffectual efforts to amend the measure in accordance with their principles. The latter moved a clause giving to the Church of England in the colonies the privileges with regard to synodical action that were enjoyed by other religious communities. The bill passed, but not without being amended in the Lower House with the consent of the government, and in the Upper in spite of its remonstrances. An attempt made by Sir F. Buxton to restore protection to free-grown as against slave-grown sugar was defeated by a majority of forty-one.

In this session Ireland was neither forgotten nor neglected; but the Irish legislation was not of such a nature as to affect appreciably the course of events in England. A measure for the extension of the franchise there passed, with some amendments introduced into it by the Lords. A bill was brought in by Lord J. Russell for the abolition of the office of lord-lieutenant, the second reading of which was carried by the large majority of 225, but the pressure of other business caused it to be deferred.

At this time the distress that pervaded the agricultural districts had converted their representatives into earnest advocates of retrenchment. Both sides of the House were vying with each other in promoting reductions of expenditure; ministers therefore felt that they must do something. They intended to begin with a reduction of official salaries, which was the plan chiefly insisted on by the advocates of retrenchment; and Lord J. Russell proposed

to refer this important question to a select committee. This proposal was resisted by Mr. Disraeli, Mr. Hume, Mr. Henley, and several others, on the ground that a select committee would not be able to obtain any information on the subject which was not already within the reach of the government; and they contended that it was the duty of ministers to deal with the matter on their own responsibility. In behalf of the proposal made by the government, it was argued that it was in accordance with precedent, and that persons whose incomes might be reduced by the alterations which the committee suggested would probably submit to the reduction with a better grace if recommended by a body so constituted as to command the confidence of all parties. The government plan was adopted by a majority of 208 to 95. The feeling in favour of economy that prevailed both in the House of Commons and in the country gave birth to several measures originated by independent members. Thus, on the 8th of March Mr. Cobden again brought forward his proposal for the gradual reduction of the expenditure of the country to the point at which it stood in the year 1835. He showed that, by allowing pensions to lapse, by suppressing or reducing the appointments of such embassies as those to Hanover and Bavaria, by lowering judicial salaries, cutting down excessive consular expenditure, and diminishing the amount devoted to the maintenance of the army and navy, it would be quite possible to reduce the total expenditure of the country by 10,000,000*l.*; a sum equal to the whole expenditure of the United States before the Mexican war, and more than the whole expenditure of Prussia. In answer to a pamphlet which had been published by a gentleman named Norman, for the purpose of proving that the country was very lightly taxed, Mr. Cobden remarked that it might be true, as this gentleman asserted, that the wealth of the country had increased, but the wealth of the country did not pay the increased taxation. Mr. Labouchere, on the part of the government, attempted to show that the increase of expenditure since the year 1835, on which Mr. Cobden based his motion, was more apparent than real, and was due to accumulated expenditure left from previous years, to accumulated charges which had been forced on the government by the House itself under the pressure of demands from different constituencies, such as those for harbours of refuge, payments in aid of rates, and expenses arising out of unforeseen calamities, as, for instance, the destruction of the two Houses of Parliament. The motion was rejected by a majority of 185. On the 13th of March Mr. Henry Drummond

brought forward a motion for the diminution of the salaries of all servants of the crown, and for the removal of every impediment that checked the growth of raw produce, which was got rid of by the common expedient of moving the previous question.

Lord Duncan re-introduced a motion for the total repeal of the window tax, the most unpopular of all taxes, and not without reason; for, in order to evade it, houses were so constructed as to diminish the quantity both of light and fresh air admitted into them. The motion was resisted by the government, and rejected by a majority of three only, in a House of 157 members. The smallness of this majority was regarded both by the friends and opponents of the tax as a proof that it would not be long maintained. A renewed attempt to repeal the malt tax was met by the argument that the exchequer could not afford the loss of a revenue of five millions, and was defeated by a majority of 124.

In the course of this year a remarkable ecclesiastical case was litigated with a degree of perseverance seldom equalled.

The Rev. George Cornelius Gorham was appointed by the lord chancellor to the vicarage of St. Just, in the diocese of Exeter, in the year 1846, and duly instituted to that living by the bishop. In the following year he was appointed by the same patron to the living of Bamford Speke, and in due course applied to the bishop for institution to his new benefice. The bishop took the strictly legal but very unusual course of subjecting Mr. Gorham to an examination in reference to certain points on which he supposed him to be unsound. The examination was carried on at great length, no fewer than 140 questions having been put by the bishop, and answered by Mr. Gorham. It extended over the 17th, 18th, 20th, 21st, and 22nd of December, and the 8th, 9th, and 10th of the following March; and at the conclusion of it the bishop declined giving Mr. Gorham institution. The matter was then carried to the Court of Arches. There it appeared that the ground of his rejection was a denial of the doctrine of baptismal regeneration as laid down in the baptismal services of the Church of England. It was argued on his behalf that the opinions he held on this subject were in accordance with those of Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, and other leading reformers. To this argument the court replied that, if this was the case, they decidedly had not so declared their opinions in any of the services of the Church, in the articles, or in any part of the Book of Common Prayer; and gave a decision in favour of the bishop. The case was carried by Mr. Gorham to the Judicial

Committee of the Privy Council, on which a final appeal from the ecclesiastical tribunal had been recently conferred. Before this court the question was argued at great length; and the sentence was expected with great interest and impatience. The gist of the judgment given by the Court of Appeal is contained in the following sentences :

"These being, as we collect them, the opinions of Mr. Gorham, the question which we have to decide is not whether they are theologically sound or unsound, not whether in some of the doctrines comprised in the opinions other opinions opposite to them may not be held with equal or even with greater reason by other learned and pious ministers of the church; but whether these opinions now under our consideration are contrary or repugnant to the doctrines which the Church of England by its articles, formularies, and rubrics requires to be held by its ministers, so that, upon the ground of these opinions, the appellant can lawfully be excluded from the benefice to which he has been presented." After examining at great length the various passages of the articles, rubrics, and formularies of the Church of England that bore upon the question before the court, the judgment thus concluded: "It appears that opinions, which cannot in any important particular be distinguished from those entertained by Mr. Gorham, have been propounded and maintained by persons so eminent and so much respected, as well as by very many others; which appears to us sufficiently to prove that the liberty which was left by the articles and formularies has been actually enjoyed and exercised by the members and ministers of the Church of England." The decision of the Judicial Committee therefore was, that Mr. Gorham ought not, by reason of the doctrine held by him, to have been refused admission to the vicarage of Bampton Speke; and the sentence pronounced in the Court of Arches was reversed.

Thus decision raised a ferment in the Church. The evangelical party, most of the members of which held opinions very similar to those which had been maintained by Mr. Gorham, had been filled with alarm. They dreaded that, if his appeal should prove unsuccessful, they might be ejected from their benefices, or prevented from obtaining farther preferment. They were therefore delighted at a decision which seemed to justify them in holding opinions which had been denounced by the orthodox party as plainly inconsistent with the articles and formularies of the Church, and which it was certainly very difficult to reconcile with the plain language of her baptismal services. On the other hand, there was

a considerable body of old High Church men, and of men who belonged to neither of the two great parties into which the Church was then divided, who disliked Mr. Gorham's opinions, but were unwilling to intrust to the bishops that power which the prelate of Exeter claimed, and dreaded that bishops holding opinions different from those of the present incumbent of that see might subject their theological opponents to an examination as rigorous as that which Mr. Gorham had undergone, and might end with refusing to institute them to livings to which they might be appointed. These, therefore, though regretting the sanction given by the Court of Final Appeal to the doctrines of Mr. Gorham, were not sorry to see this attempt to increase the power of the bishops defeated; and the patrons of livings throughout the kingdom, whose rights were endangered by the claim put forward by Dr Phillpotts, sympathised with this feeling almost to a man. But the Oxford Tracts, which had now run their course, had produced a new High Church party, the members of which did not indeed all of them accept the whole of the teaching of those Tracts, but were to a man zealous for the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, and warmly contended that the right of stating and determining her own doctrine was inherent in the Church, and one with which no lay tribunal ought to intermeddle. They contended that questions involving doctrine ought to be referred to the spirituality, meaning by that term either the bishops alone, or the bishops and clergy in convocation assembled. They were therefore unanimous and indignant in their condemnation of the judgment, and attempt after attempt was made to procure a reversal of it, the question being carried first into the Court of Queen's Bench, then into the Court of Common Pleas, and finally into the Court of Exchequer, in the vain hope of upsetting the judgment.

Apart from this feeling, there were strong and well-grounded objections to the constitution of a court which had now for the first time been called on to decide an important theological question. It was not only composed of laymen, but it might be composed of nonconformists, who would thus decide on the doctrines of the Church, and on the manner in which her services should be conducted. It might indeed be urged that it was the business of the tribunal not to make laws, but to interpret them, and that a dissenting lawyer might be, and probably would be, a better and a more dispassionate interpreter of the law of the Church than an orthodox divine; but it was contended on the other hand, that, when the doctrines of the Church or the meaning of her formularies were in

question, she possessed the right, and ought to be permitted the opportunity, of declaring what they were. Besides, the manner in which the judges were selected was alleged to be very unsatisfactory, and to open the door to the choice of men whose leanings were known to be in favour of a particular decision, and whose judgment on the question submitted to the court might be anticipated beforehand. It was also objected, that the judges were supposed to exercise a certain discretionary power, and to be guided by considerations of expediency, to decide in such a manner as they deemed best adapted to advance the interests of the State as well as of the Church. For these reasons the decisions of this court have never commanded the respect which are almost invariably yielded to the judgments of the Queen's Bench, the Exchequer, and the Common Pleas.

But in the *Gorham* case there was a circumstance which increased the dissatisfaction with which the decision was received. The Archbishops of Canterbury and York, and the Bishop of London, sat as assessors to the judges. The first-mentioned prelates had been recently appointed by a government whose patronage was in question, and which was exceedingly unpopular with the clergy. They had given their opinions in favour of Mr. *Gorham*; but the Bishop of London, a far abler man than either of them, and possessing in a far higher degree than either the confidence of churchmen generally, had given his opinion decidedly in favour of the Bishop of Exeter. And so strongly did he object to the character of the court in which he had sat and by which this question had been decided, that he introduced a bill into the House of Lords on the 3rd of June for the establishment of a new tribunal for ecclesiastical appeals in the place of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. Had he attempted to remodel that court in such a manner as to inspire greater confidence in its competence and impartiality, he would probably have succeeded. But instead of doing this, he proposed to substitute for it a court of bishops. This proposal was open to objection on many grounds; but the argument which weighed most with the House of Lords was founded on its supposed interference with the royal supremacy. But, whatever force there may have been in the other objections to the bill, this does not appear to carry much weight with it. In either case the supremacy would be exercised through a regularly constituted tribunal; and whether it should be a court of laymen or a court of bishops seems to be immaterial so far as the question of the supremacy is concerned. But a tribunal composed of bishops would certainly

have commanded even less confidence than the existing tribunal. The debate was long, and was carried on with a degree of animation and emotion seldom displayed in the Upper House. On the question of the second reading the numbers were—

For the second reading	...	...	...	...	...	51
Against	...	...	...	...	...	84
						<hr/>
Majority against the bill	...	...	...	...	...	33

Few events have ever produced greater manifestations of discontent than a very simple motion adopted by the House of Commons. Lord Ashley moved and carried a resolution for an address to her majesty, praying that she would be graciously pleased to direct that the collection and delivery of letters should in future entirely *cease* on the Lord's-day in all parts of the kingdom. The government, therefore, partly from deference to the will of the majority, partly from annoyance at the defection or absence of their usual supporters, which had allowed the vote to be carried against them, but with a full foresight of the inconveniences which would result from it, and the discontent it would produce in all parts of the kingdom, determined to give effect to it as promptly as possible. When their intention became known, protests and representations poured in from all parts of the kingdom. If the complaints had been loud when the intentions of the government were first announced, they waxed louder still when they were thus put in force, and the inconveniences attendant on the new arrangement began to be felt. The press, which not only reflected the opinion of the public on the subject, but had grievances of its own to complain of, and whose interests were most seriously affected by the change, agitated strongly for a return to the old practice. Lord Ashley for a time was the most unpopular man in the kingdom. On the 29th of July Mr. Locke moved another address to her majesty, praying her to institute an inquiry in order to ascertain whether the Sunday labour might not be reduced without putting an end to the collection and delivery of letters on that day. The result was a return, after a brief interval, to the old practice, which has ever since been continued.

Lord Ashley was more successful in another measure which he introduced. The last factory bill was so worded that, in the opinion of the law-courts, it did not carry out the known intentions of those who advocated it or of the legislature which passed it. Lord Ashley therefore brought in a bill to amend it; and, with the consent of its

mover and several of his supporters, a compromise was effected, establishing the short-time system almost in its entirety; whereupon the government took the measure into its own hands, and carried it through both Houses.

But of all the debates of this session, the most remarkable was one occasioned by the foreign policy of Lord Palmerston, who had asserted, in a very high-handed manner, the rights of English citizens against the government of Greece. A vote of censure on that policy had been adopted by the Lords, and, if maintained, would have necessitated the retirement of that minister, and probably the resignation of the government. To prevent this result Mr. Roebuck brought forward a motion couched in terms which not only conveyed an approval of the foreign policy of Lord Palmerston, but also implied an oblique censure on the somewhat different policy of Lord Aberdeen, who had held the seals of the Foreign Office under Sir Robert Peel. Never had Sir Robert displayed greater moderation or kindness. He warmly and ably defended his late colleague; spoke of Lord Palmerston in the highest terms; gave him wise and sound advice, pointed out the dangers that attended his policy, and announced his intention to vote against the motion; which, however, was carried by 310 to 264. It was early on Saturday morning when Sir Robert Peel quitted the House, and the sun had risen before he lay down to rest. But he could not give many hours to sleep, for at twelve o'clock he was to be present at a meeting of the commissioners of the Great Industrial Exhibition that was to take place next year, and at that meeting the place in which the Exhibition should be held was to be decided. After his return from it, he passed the afternoon in his study until five o'clock, when he went out to take a ride in the park. After calling at Buckingham Palace, he went on to Constitution Hill, where he met Miss Ellis, a daughter of Lady Dover, who was also on horseback, and stopped for a moment to chat with her. His horse, which was young and fresh, suddenly shied and threw him off, but as he still clung to the bridle, he caused it to fall with its knees on his shoulders. A medical man, Dr. Foucart, of Glasgow, happened to be on the spot, and, with the assistance of another gentleman, lifted Sir Robert into a carriage which was passing at the time. Before it reached his home Sir James Clark, one of the physicians of the queen, who had heard of the accident, came to offer his assistance, and with Dr. Foucart accompanied him to his house. The sight of Lady Peel, and the distress that she showed, caused Sir Robert to faint on his

arrival. Sir Benjamin Brodie and all the first surgeons of London were sent for; but their aid was of little avail. Sir Robert's nervous system was peculiarly sensitive to pain, and this sensitiveness had increased by age and labour. Every attempt made by his medical attendants to ascertain the nature of the injuries he had received was frustrated on account of the frightful anguish it caused. It was only after his decease that it was ascertained that one of his ribs had been fractured, and that the broken end penetrating the left lobe of the lungs had caused the fatal result.

He sank rapidly. The presence of his wife and children produced such a dangerous irritation that it was necessary to remove them from his chamber. At one moment, under a violent access of delirium, he tried to spring out of bed; in the next he sank into such a state of prostration that he seemed to be at the point of death. He was visited by his old friend Dr. Tomlinson, bishop of Gibraltar, and his family were re-admitted to his chamber while the bishop offered up at his bedside the prayers for the sick. The dying man's consciousness for a moment returned. He extended his hand over the mournful and kneeling group, and said, in slow and half-articulate accents, "God bless you! God bless you!" His intimate friends and political associates, Lord Hardinge and Sir James Graham, whose names had been frequently on his lips in the incoherent utterances of this delirium, were admitted to his bedside, and in their presence, and that of his medical attendants and several of his relations, he sank quietly into his last sleep on Tuesday, the 2nd of July, at nine minutes past eleven in the evening.

While these things were passing in the dying man's chamber, all London was agitated with sorrow and anxiety. The multitudes of inquiries were so great that policemen were stationed at different places near his house with bulletins, which they were ordered to read to the crowds of all ages, sexes, and conditions that flocked to Whitehall, anxiously inquiring after the suffering statesman. Never perhaps did the intelligence of any event cause more genuine grief in the country than the news of his death. Since his retirement from office he had withdrawn from the arena of party conflict. The enmity caused by the course he had pursued in reference to the corn-laws had disappeared, while the gratitude and admiration which his conduct had excited were still fresh and lively. When he rose to speak on any question before the House of Commons, the words that dropped from his lips were listened to on both sides of the House as the utterances of an oracle.

In both Houses of Parliament such allusions were made to the event, and such tributes offered to the memory of the illustrious departed, as might have been anticipated. M. Dupin, president of the French legislative assembly, speaking in his official capacity, passed a high encomium on the policy of Sir R. Peel with regard to France, and some time afterwards a still more eminent Frenchman gave a testimony in his favour, which we quote because it places his character in a light in which it has not often been regarded.

“What struck me most,” says Guizot, “in the conversation of Sir Robert Peel, was his constant and impassioned anxiety with regard to the condition of the working classes in England; an anxiety which was as much moral as it was political, and beneath which, under a certain coldness and formality of expression, the feelings of the man as well as the foresight of the statesman were clearly visible. ‘There is there,’ he was continually accustomed to say, ‘too much suffering and too much perplexity. It is a disgrace and a danger to our civilization. It is absolutely necessary that we should render the condition of the manual labourer less hard and less precarious. We cannot do everything, but something may be effected, and something ought to be done.’ In the active thought of his leisure, this was evidently for him the dominant idea of the future.”

Nothing perhaps more strongly illustrates the greatness of the loss which the country had sustained through the accident that so tragically closed the mortal career of Sir Robert Peel than the excitement which was caused, towards its close, by what was generally described as the “Papal aggression”—an excitement which his judicious and tolerant counsels and high authority would probably have calmed. In 1848 the attempt to establish diplomatic relations with the Roman Pontiff had been frustrated. The country which had so long maintained diplomatic relations with the Sultan was convulsed at the idea of carrying on negotiations with the Pope; and though the bill introduced with this view was passed, it was so altered as to be insulting and offensive. It had been determined by the heads of the Roman Catholic church that the English branch of their communion, hitherto governed by vicars-apostolic, who were bishops taking their titles from places situated in *partibus infidelium*, should have a new division of dioceses, and should be ruled by bishops taking their titles from English towns, and having an Archbishop of Westminster at their head. Dr. Wiseman, the most conspicuous ecclesiastic of the Roman church in England, and who had hitherto exercised a kind of

primacy over the English Roman Catholics, under the title of Bishop of Melipotamus, was now created a cardinal, appointed to be the first Archbishop of Westminster, and sent to England as the head of the new Romish hierarchy. These plans and intentions were announced, and the boundaries of the new sees defined, in a document couched in the grandiloquent style employed by the bishops of Rome in the palmy days of their power, and which the Roman chancery still used. The appearance of this manifesto was followed by the publication of a pastoral from the new cardinal, which surpassed it in pretentious absurdity, though it was probably not intended or expected to give offence, being meant chiefly for the Roman Catholics of England, to whom it was addressed. But whatever may have been the intentions of those by whom these documents were issued, they roused the anti-papery feeling, which, notwithstanding many blows and heavy discouragements, was still strong, and had been not a little exasperated by the proceedings of the Tractarians. The excitement would soon have passed away, if the prime minister had not taken up the matter in a way that raised a tempest, from the effects of which his own government soon after suffered shipwreck.

Lord J. Russell's Whig principles and Presbyterian tendencies caused him to regard with strong and peculiar jealousy the progress that the Tractarians were making; this feeling was sharpened by the opposition offered by them to the appointments he had made to the episcopal bench, the language they used with regard to the royal supremacy, and the unconcealed dislike with which they regarded the Whig party. Therefore, without consulting any of his colleagues, he gave vent to his feelings in a letter addressed to the Bishop of Durham, long celebrated under the name of the Durham Letter.

This letter strongly stimulated the agitation which the "aggression" had already raised. Many of the bishops induced their clergy, through their archdeacons and rural deans, to sign remonstrances echoing the sentiments conveyed in the prime minister's letter. The Bishop of London, who was supposed to regard with too indulgent an eye some of the practices which the premier denounced, delivered a charge to his clergy in which he condemned in the most decided manner the papal rescript. Laymen of all classes and of all denominations came forward by addresses to the crown, and in other ways, to oppose the papal pretensions. Even Jews took part in the meetings that

were held to defend "our common Protestantism." As Lord J. Russell's letter appeared on the 4th November, the ferment was at its height on the 5th, and consequently effigies of the pope and the cardinal throughout the kingdom took the place of those of Guy Fawkes, and were committed to the flames with all the honours of squibs, crackers, and rockets, which were usually bestowed on that worthy. Meanwhile, Cardinal Wiseman treated the demonstrations of which he was the object with calm disregard. He had written a quiet and sensible letter, in which he explained that the substitution of bishops for vicars-apostolic, and the changes which had been made in the boundaries of the Roman Catholic dioceses, were purely ecclesiastical arrangements, which ought not to have awakened alarm or given offence. But Lord J. Russell, and the party that had taken up the cry he had raised, were too excited to listen to reason. There were, nevertheless, many among his ablest and most valued supporters who strongly disapproved of the Durham letter, and felt that the violent anti-papery storm it had raised was sure to be followed by a reaction, which would redound to the advantage of the Roman Catholic church; and on the other hand there were a few Roman Catholics who, like Lord Beaumont and the Duke of Norfolk, complained that they were placed in a false position by the ill-advised measures of the pope. The excitement, however, was industriously fomented; many addresses in the sense of the Durham letter were numerous signed; and when parliament assembled on the 4th of February, 1851, the queen's speech contained an allusion to the aggression, and announced that a measure would be laid before parliament calculated to "maintain the rights of the crown, and the independence of the nation against all encroachments."

This pitiful squabble was engrossing the attention of the government, the legislature, and the country, at the commencement of the year which had been fixed for the Great Exhibition of the Industry of All Nations, suggested by Prince Albert, and which was hoped and expected to collect the products and natives of almost every nation under heaven. It was probably the desire to get rid of this embarrassing question before the inauguration of the great cosmopolitan fête that led Lord J. Russell to bring in his measure relating to the papal aggression only three days after the meeting of parliament. It prohibited the assumption of territorial titles by Roman Catholic bishops; but it could not prevent other persons from giving them those titles, and had the effect of causing them to be more

ostentatiously and offensively employed than they would have been if the aggression had been passed by in dignified silence. Lord J. Russell publicly recommended the new cardinal to adopt the title of Archbishop *in* Westminster instead of Archbishop *of* Westminster, and to remain at Rome instead of coming to England. But the cardinal quietly disregarded both suggestions. He showed no undue haste to enter on his new functions; but he assumed them after a short delay with a calm dignity that contrasted most advantageously with the blustering violence of the attacks that had been made on him. The ill-advised clamour raised against him recoiled on his assailants, and increased the zeal and enthusiasm of his adherents. The bill, however, was read a first time by a majority of 332; a majority that seemed to hold out a prospect that it would speedily be carried; that prospect was, however, somewhat changed by events we shall presently have occasion to relate.

In the mean time the agricultural distress which had so long prevailed and so often forced itself on the attention of the legislature was still unabated, and had even increased in its severity. It was acknowledged and lamented in the queen's speech at the opening of the session. Mr. Disraeli therefore moved a resolution to the effect, that it was the duty of the government to introduce measures for its alleviation without delay. To this motion the government and their friends replied by alleging, that the real object that its proposer had in view was a return to protection, and that, though the landlords and farmers were suffering, the condition of the labouring classes had greatly improved. In proof of the truth of this assertion, it was shown that a decrease in pauperism had taken place in England to the extent of fourteen in every hundred, in Ireland to the extent of one-half, while in Scotland there had also been a considerable reduction in the number. In spite of all the remissions of taxation which had been made, the revenue had reached the unexampled amount of 70,000,000*l*. Notwithstanding the repeal of the navigation laws, the outward tonnage of British merchant ships was 180,000 in excess of that of 1849, and an enormous and unprecedented quantity of wheat had been imported, consumed, and paid for by millions who, without this supply, would have been destitute of food. The division was a close one, and seemed to show that the protectionist party was rapidly gaining strength, and would probably be able before long to defeat ministers, and take possession of the government of the country. The numbers were—

For Mr. Disraeli's motion	267
Against it	281
Majority	14

On the next question on which their strength was tried ministers underwent a very damaging defeat.

Mr. Locke King, the member for East Surrey, asked leave to introduce a bill for assimilating the county franchise to that of the boroughs. His motion was resisted by Lord J. Russell, but was carried by a majority of 100 against 52. The defeat of the government took place on the 20th of February. On the 17th of that month the chancellor of the exchequer made his financial statement, which was received with expressions of dissatisfaction from various quarters, so strong that ministers, feeling that they no longer commanded the confidence of the House, determined to retire; and that determination was announced in the *Times* and other newspapers on the morning of the 21st. The House was therefore crowded in all parts on the evening of that day, in the expectation that some explanation would be made of the views and intentions of the government: it was announced, however, that no statement would be made till the 24th. It was then deferred till the 28th, when it was announced that Lord Stanley had found it impossible to construct a protectionist ministry; that the Earl of Aberdeen, summoned to assist in the reconstitution of Lord J. Russell's administration, had been prevented from lending his assistance by the insuperable repugnance with which he and other members of the Peel party regarded the penal measures with which Lord J. Russell had encountered the papal aggression, and which had been accepted by a large majority in the House of Commons. Under these circumstances, Lord J. Russell and his colleagues had consented, at the request of the queen, to retain their offices. The Ecclesiastical Titles Bill was once more brought forward, shorn of all its efficiency, and toned down into a mere *brutum fulmen*, insulting to the Catholics, but little in accordance with the expectations that the Durham letter had raised; not even satisfactory to the Inglises, the Spooners, the Newdegates, and the Plumptres; and encountering the strong opposition of almost every man who had assisted in removing those restrictions on the religious liberties of Englishmen which Lord J. Russell had done more perhaps than any living man to take away. Seven nights were spent in debate on the second reading of the bill. When the House divided the numbers were—

For the second reading	...	...	...	...	438
Against	...	...	...	...	95
Majority for the government					343

But the minority, small as it was when compared with the number of those who voted in favour of the second reading of the measure, comprised all the ablest advocates of civil and religious liberty in the House: Graham, Gladstone, Roundell Palmer, Cobden, Bright, Roebuck, Milner Gibson, Hume. Sir J. Graham argued against the bill with great force; and it was remarked that his speech elicited loud cheers from the ministerial benches; while Lord J. Russell spoke amidst the chilling silence of his own supporters and the loud applause of the opposition, and especially of those members of it who had all along offered the most uncompromising resistance to the efforts he had made for the promotion of civil and religious liberty.

The farther progress of the measure was doggedly contested at every step by the Roman Catholic members; repeated divisions took place, in all of which ministers triumphed, but which delayed the progress of the bill; and when Sir F. Thesiger moved a string of resolutions embodying the views of those who were dissatisfied with the ministerial measure, because they considered that it did not go far enough, the Irish Roman Catholic members rose in a body and walked out of the House, leaving the ministers to contend as they could against the more extreme supporters of their own bill. The consequence was, that three of the resolutions proposed by Sir F. Thesiger, all of which the government opposed, and the last of which it opposed strenuously, were carried; and an attempt made by Lord J. Russell to get rid of them on the third reading of the bill was defeated by large majorities. When the question was put, That this bill do now pass, there was no debate; and the numbers on the division were—

For the motion	...	...	...	...	263
Against	...	...	...	...	46
Majority for government					217

In the House of Lords the measure was dealt with, if not more satisfactorily, at least more shortly. The debate on the second reading extended over two nights; in one night more the bill went through committee without alteration.

The chief cause of the resignation of the government was the dissatisfaction with which the budget was regarded. As they had decided to remain in office, it was necessary that they should modify their financial measures in such a way as to meet the objections urged against them. Accordingly, on the 5th of April, the chancellor of the exchequer made a second statement, which met with a much more favourable reception than that which had brought about the resignation of the government.

The attempt to put an end to the income tax, which the finance minister had foreseen and deprecated, was not long delayed. On the 5th of April Mr. Herries moved the following resolution: "That the income and property tax, and the stamp duties in Ireland, were granted for limited periods, and to meet temporary exigencies: and that it is expedient to adhere to the declared intentions of parliament, and, in order to secure their speedy cessation, to limit the renewal of any portion of those taxes to such an amount as may suffice to provide for the expenditure sanctioned by parliament, and for the maintenance of the public credit." The motion was negatived by 278 against 230.

Mr. Hume was more fortunate in a motion he made that the grant of the income tax should be limited to one year, in order that the whole question of the tax might be deliberately considered in a select committee. This amendment was carried. The numbers were—

For Mr. Hume's amendment	...	...	...	244
Against	...	..	...	230
Majority against the government				14

A difficulty, however, arose with regard to the appointment of the select committee, in consequence of the discordant views of the two parties that had combined to carry Mr. Hume's motion. That gentleman wished to inquire with a view to the improvement of the tax. As the matter was well put by Mr. Herries, "My proposition is either to amend the tax or abolish it. Mr. Hume's proposition is, Amend it if you can; but if not, keep it as it is." This difference made it very difficult to find members willing to sit on the committee. However, after many applications and many rebuffs, Mr. Hume at last succeeded.

A long debate took place on resolutions submitted to the House by Mr. Disraeli, having for their object to prevent the repeal of the window and timber taxes, on the ground that the possible discon-

tinnance of the income tax next year rendered their retention desirable; but the resolutions were rejected by a majority of 113. Persistent attempts made by Mr. Baring to prevent the adulteration of coffee with chicory were also defeated by large majorities. Motions made by Mr. Cayley for the entire repeal of the malt tax, and by Mr. Bass for the repeal of half of it, were likewise rejected. In the last session Lord Naas had succeeded in carrying against the government a motion for making an allowance for evaporation and leakage in raising the revenue on spirits, and the government had with some difficulty succeeded in reversing the decision. This year Lord Naas renewed his motion, and on a division the numbers on both sides were 150; whereupon the Speaker, in accordance with custom, gave his casting vote for going into committee on the question, and thus allowing the House an opportunity for farther consideration of the matter. On another division, which took place on the 6th of June, government was in a minority of seventeen; but by great efforts this decision was at length reversed, and the bill rejected by a majority of 28. Ministers suffered yet another defeat on a bill introduced by Lord Robert Grosvenor to repeal the duty on attorneys' certificates; but at a later stage they succeeded in rejecting the measure.

The bill of Mr. Locke King, which was the immediate cause of the resignation of the government, was again brought forward on the 2nd of April by that gentleman, who moved that it should be read a second time. This motion drew from Lord J. Russell a distinct pledge that the government would bring forward a measure of parliamentary reform early in the following session, which had the desired effect; and the bill of Mr. Locke King, which had been accepted in the first instance by so large a majority, was now rejected by a majority of 216.

Mr. Henry Berkeley, who had succeeded Mr. Grote as the annual mover of a resolution in favour of the ballot, carried his motion this year, in spite of the opposition of Lord J. Russell and the government, by a majority of 37.

A debate of more than ordinary interest and importance took place on the proposal made by Mr. Cobden for the adjustment of international disputes by arbitration instead of by war. After having extracted from Lord Palmerston a very strong assurance of the desire entertained by himself and his colleagues to do everything in their power to preserve peace and a good understanding with France, Mr. Cobden withdrew the motion. A bill for the admission of Jews into parliament, read a second time in the House of

Commons by a majority of 25, and a third time without a division, was rejected in the Upper House by a majority of 36. This, however, did not altogether settle the question, even for this session. Alderman Salomons, a member of the Jewish community, had been elected for Greenwich. Before his election he had pledged himself to the constituency that, if he should be the object of their choice, he would take his seat in the House of Commons. Accordingly, on the 18th of July, he presented himself before the Speaker, and demanded to be allowed to take the oath. Luke Baron Rothschild, he omitted the words, "on the true faith of a Christian." He was then ordered to withdraw: instead, however, of complying with the order, he took his seat on a bench at the right hand of the Speaker; but on receiving a second order he retired below the bar. On the evening of the 21st, however, he walked up to the House amidst tremendous cries of "Order!" and took his seat below the gangway on the ministerial side. The Speaker again desired him to withdraw; but, in spite of the loud and angry outcries of a large number of members, he kept his seat. The Speaker then appealed to the House to support him in the discharge of his duty, and Lord J. Russell moved that Mr. Salomons should be ordered to withdraw. To this motion Mr. B. Osborne moved an amendment, to the effect that as Mr. Salomons had taken the oaths in the manner that was most binding on his conscience, he was entitled to a seat in the House. Mr. Anstey then rose, amidst an uproar that made it impossible for a single word that he uttered to be heard. He at length, however, succeeded in moving an adjournment of the debate; but the motion was negatived by a majority of 275 to 65, Mr. Salomons himself voting in the minority. After some farther discussion, Mr. Osborne's amendment was put to the vote and rejected by a majority of 218. But Mr. Salomons, who had abstained from taking part in the division, re-entered the House and took his seat. Another uproar ensued, and Mr. Hobhouse called on Mr. Salomons to state to the House the course he intended to adopt. Thus challenged, Mr. Salomons stood up and explained his reasons for entering the House.

The discussion was still continued, and two farther divisions were taken, in both of which Mr. Salomons voted, and having been once more ineffectually directed by the Speaker to withdraw, he was at length led out of the House by the sergent-at-arms. His departure, however, did not put an end to the discussion. It was carried on still at great length, adjourned, and afterwards resumed, with no other result than the deliverance of a great number of conflict-

ing legal opinions, and a decision that Mr. Salomons was not entitled to a seat in the House.

A bill was passed in the course of this session which empowered the Court of Chancery, by the creation of new judicial offices, to perform its functions with more dispatch. But the session as a whole was remarkably barren of legislative results; a circumstance owing to the time consumed by the debates on the Ecclesiastical Titles Assumption Bill, and to the manner in which the attention both of parliament and the country was drawn away from many of those political questions which had been for some time pressing for a solution, to the Great Exhibition of the Industry of All Nations.

The idea on which this Exhibition was founded was not altogether new. Exhibitions of a somewhat similar nature, though on a much smaller scale, had been held in Paris in 1801, 1806, 1836, and 1849, and in Belgium, Germany, Spain, and other European countries. But the one that approached most nearly to it in character, and might be regarded as in some sort its true precursor, was the great free-trade bazaar, held in Covent-garden Theatro in 1846. The Exhibition which was now to take place completely eclipsed all that had gone before it, not only in the quantity, quality, and variety of the articles exhibited, but in the national, or rather cosmopolitan, character that belonged to it. The holding of it was, in fact, the commencement of a new era in the history of industrial progress. It was a solemn glorification of industry, a world-wide recognition of the position it had won; a proclamation to the uttermost parts of the earth that it was no longer its destiny to be the despised drudge of the Nimrods and mighty hunters of the world, but that it had made good its claim to a place of full equality with them. Such was the significance of this great event. To Prince Albert belonged the honour of having brought it about. As president of the Society of Arts, and then as president of the royal commission issued mainly through his influence, he had promoted it with all the active earnestness of his character, and with all the power that belonged to his high position. Indeed, it would have been impossible for any person possessing less influence, or occupying an inferior place, to have carried out the grand idea which the Great Exhibition embodied on a scale so magnificent, and with such signal success. Under his earnest and energetic lead, 64,000*l.* was subscribed, and a guarantee fund of 200,000*l.* promised. The first difficulty with which he and the other promoters of the design had to contend was the selection

of a site for a building to contain the objects sent for exhibition. The southern part of Hyde Park was, after careful consideration, pitched on. But no sooner was the choice publicly known than a loud outcry was raised against what was ridiculously termed the "profanation of the park," and all kinds of exaggerated statements were made of the extent to which the enjoyment of the public would be interfered with by the construction of the building. Answers were made to these complaints, which satisfied all reasonable men. The next difficulty was the selection of a plan. It was announced in June, 1850, that one had been selected, out of some 140, by the building committee, and accepted by the commissioners. It was immensely long, wide, and low, like an enormous railway shed, with a huge and disproportioned cupola, considerably larger than that of St. Peter's at Rome, in its centre. The choice was not made without many doubts and misgivings. The cost of its erection, and the prodigious mass of bricks and other materials which must be employed in its construction, and which would have to be taken away after the close of the Exhibition, were very serious objections to the plan. It was just at this moment that a lucky thought struck Mr. Paxton, the head-gardener of the Duke of Devonshire. He had superintended the great conservatory at Chatsworth, and had been engaged on the construction of many other buildings of a similar character, though on a smaller scale. He was thoroughly acquainted with all the advantages of such buildings, and he had overcome many practical difficulties which had hitherto attended their construction. The thought occurred to his mind, "Why not erect a palace of glass and iron large enough to contain all the articles that are likely to be sent for exhibition?" He at once proceeded to plan such a building as he had imagined. He drew the first rough sketch of it on a piece of blotting-paper which happened to be lying before him. He then inquired if there was yet time to admit a new proposal. After some hesitation the question was answered in the affirmative, and a fortnight was allowed him for the preparation of his plans and drawings. Before the end of that time all was ready, and the building committee was furnished with all the information it required.

The chief advantages of the plan thus submitted at the eleventh or rather at the twelfth hour were, the quantity of light admitted, the extraordinary simplicity of the construction of the building—which was to consist of nothing else but glass and the iron supports of the glass—the facility with which it could be prepared, erected, removed, and re-erected on some other site if needful, the graceful-

ness of its appearance, and the advantages it afforded for ventilation. The following concise description of the plan was given by Mr. Paxton :—

“The building will be 2100 feet long by 400 broad. The centre aisle will be 120 feet broad, or 10 feet wider than the conservatory at Chatsworth. The glass and the iron supports comprise the whole structure. The columns are precisely the same throughout the whole building, and would fit every part; the same may be said of each of the bars; and every piece of glass will be of the same size, namely 4 feet long. The whole will be put together like a perfect piece of machinery. The building is entirely divided into 24 places—in short, everything runs to 24; so that the work is made to square and fit without any small detail being left to carry out. The number of columns 15 feet long is 6024. There are 3000 gallery-bearers, 1245 wrought-iron girders, 45 miles of sash-bars, and 1,073,760 feet of glass to cover the whole. The building will stand on upwards of 20 acres of ground; but the available space which may be afforded by the galleries can be extended to about 30 acres if necessary. The whole will be covered in by the 1st of January, 1851. Now if, after the purposes of the Exhibition are answered, it is thought desirable to let the building remain—and I sincerely hope it will not be pulled down, nor sent to America—there might be an excellent carriage-drive round the interior, as well as a road for equestrians, with the centre tastefully laid out and planted; and then there will be nearly six miles of room in the galleries as a promenade for the public.”

An engraving and brief description of the proposed palace of glass appeared in the *Illustrated News* of July 6, 1850; which, though hardly doing justice to the design, and not exhibiting the transepts and other improvements, which added greatly to the elegance of the actual structure, produced a strong public opinion in its favour, and helped to remove many obstacles that stood in the way of the adoption of Mr. Paxton's ideas. His plan triumphed. The contract for the carrying out of the work was undertaken by Messrs. Fox and Henderson, who employed an army of labourers numbering nearly two thousand men. They had to contend with many difficulties—with a singularly wet and unfavourable season, with the shortness of the time allowed them for the completion of the building, with combinations of the workmen employed in its construction. But, in spite of every hindrance, the work was well done, quite within the time stipulated. Then the commissioners met with fresh embarrassments in the apportionment of space

to the various countries which had announced their intention of sending specimens of their productions or of the results of their industry to the great world-bazaar. This difficult point was to some extent settled by the happy idea of a geographical arrangement. It was decided that the transept should represent the equator, and that the various contributing nations should be arranged in the building according to Mercator's projection. This device appeased many disputes; but, even with the help of a plan so manifestly equitable, the utmost possible tact and discretion were needed to arbitrate in differences, often of the most absurd character, to which national jealousies and susceptibilities gave rise. Another difficulty, which at any other time would have been almost insurmountable, was that of finding interpreters to carry on the communications between the English authorities and exhibitors from all parts of the world, speaking almost every language under heaven. This difficulty was overcome by the employment of refugees, who during the political troubles of the Continent had fled to England. These men, being for the most part in a destitute condition, were glad to give their services for a very moderate remuneration.

The contents of this vast building were arranged under the four classes of—1, natural productions; 2, machinery; 3, manufactures; and 4, works of art. It would be superfluous and wearying to the reader to attempt to give any detailed account of the multitudinous articles exhibited under these different heads, and it is the less necessary because many subsequent exhibitions of the same nature have followed, which, though they have been inferior to this first one in the interest excited, the results produced, and the bold originality of the building, have nevertheless surpassed it in the quantity and variety and the orderly classification and arrangement of their contents. The opening ceremony took place on the 1st of May. The day was all that could be wished. A countless multitude of spectators had gathered outside, and covered the park in every direction. At mid-day precisely the Queen and Prince Albert drove up to the building, amidst the enthusiastic shouts of the vast assemblage. The moment they entered it the royal standard rose majestically above the hundred and one flags of various nations which decorated the building, and contributed in no small degree to enhance its beauty. A grander spectacle or more striking pageant than that which took place within was perhaps never exhibited, when, amidst all the pomp and splendour that the Court of England could display, amid the

sound of many trumpets, the solemn and jubilant strains of loud-pealing organs, amidst a crowd of eminent Englishmen and illustrious foreigners, the Queen, then in the prime of her youth and beauty, opened this unrivalled collection of the triumphs of human genius, in the most striking building that any age has produced, and that human skill and perseverance have ever erected. After the Queen, surrounded by the ladies of her suite, the ministers of state, ambassadors from all parts of the world, and the archbishops and bishops of the church, had seated herself on a throne that had been set for her, while the organ pealed forth the well-known notes of the National Anthem, and a multitude of voices, like the sound of mighty waters, poured forth the grand old hymn, Prince Albert, putting himself at the head of those eminent men who were appointed to carry out the preparatory arrangements, read the report of the commission in a clear and sonorous voice, and then handed the Queen a copy of it, accompanied by a splendidly bound catalogue of the articles to be exhibited. A suitable prayer having been offered up by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Hallelujah Chorus appropriately closed the inaugural proceedings. The Exhibition was visited by multitudes from all parts of England, and by foreigners of all nations. In order to insure as far as possible the pecuniary success of the enterprise, the prices of admission were gradually reduced. Five-shilling days were succeeded by half-crown days, and these in turn by shilling and even sixpenny days. Twice the public were admitted without any charge. This went on till the 15th of October, when the Exhibition was closed with another solemn ceremony, over which Prince Albert presided. It had been in every respect highly successful. Not the least among the many advantages that attended this great assemblage of the natives and productions of almost every country of the world was the tendency it had to promote peace and good-will, and to cause the institutions of England to be better understood and appreciated. Foreigners were particularly struck by the orderly conduct of the vast multitudes congregated about the building to witness the opening ceremony, and by the almost entire absence of police to control them. The holding of the Exhibition also gave occasion to the exchange of many international civilities. Thus the Crystal Palace was at once a temple of industry and a temple of peace. It made the productions of the various nations of the world to be better known. It taught manufacturers where best to seek the raw materials they required, and how to improve their manufacturing

processes. It fostered a healthy industrial emulation, and gave rise to other exhibitions having like objects and producing similar results. And all this it effected at a moment when the ties that bound the great nations of Europe together were being subjected to a strong strain, and when it was particularly desirable that they should not be torn asunder. For all these advantages England and Europe were chiefly indebted to the enlightened guidance and zealous patronage of Prince Albert. If all the visions of peace, prosperity, and of the advent of a new golden age which the Exhibition raised, were afterwards rudely dispelled, the fault was not his. The palace was afterwards purchased by a joint-stock company, and was re-erected at Sydenham, in the following year, under the name of the Crystal Palace.

Side by side with our account of the opening of the Crystal Palace we may not unfitly place the foundation of Owen's College in Manchester; an event which, though of more limited importance, may in its nature be classed with that great and successful effort to benefit mankind. Mr John Owens, a merchant of Manchester, died on the 29th of July, 1846, leaving behind him a large property: Having no near relatives, he proposed to bequeath the bulk of it to his intimate friend, Mr. George Faulkner. This gentleman, however, refused the legacy for himself, and suggested the application that was actually made of it. In compliance with his recommendation, Mr. Owens left by will the sum of 100,000*l.* to found within the borough of Manchester "an institution for providing or aiding the means of instructing and improving young persons of the male sex, and being of an age of not less than fourteen years, in such branches of learning and science as are now or may be hereafter usually taught in the English universities." He farther directed that neither the students nor the teachers should be subject to any religious test, and that the institution should be open to all applicants without distinction of rank or place of birth, preference being given first to natives of Manchester, and next to natives of South Lancashire. The college was opened on the 12th of March, 1851, and affiliated to the University of London. It has since been enriched with benefactions which rival in their amount those which have been bestowed on the colleges of the two great English universities. In the year following the opening of the college upwards of 10,000*l.* were contributed. In 1854 Mr. George Faulkner, whose share in the first institution of the college has already been mentioned, in addition to several other donations previously made, gave the land and buildings it originally occupied, with the excep-

tion of the chemical laboratory, which was erected subsequently. The first Bishop of Manchester bequeathed to the college a library of 7000 volumes, rich in biblical and patristic literature, and especially in materials for Greek Testament criticism. Lastly, not to mention many smaller contributions, upwards of 100,000*l.* was raised for the purpose of erecting a new and more suitable building on a better site, in order to make the institution more generally available, and in the hope of ultimately rendering it the university of the manufacturing districts, in furtherance of which object a legal and a medical school have been recently added, and an act of parliament obtained.

The interest taken in politics, which had been momentarily eclipsed by the interest taken in the Great Exhibition, revived in full force at the approach of the session of 1852. Two circumstances contributed to give it greater intensity—the dismissal of Lord Palmerston, and the promise of a Reform Bill. The first of these events excited considerable attention, not only on account of the boldness and ability which had characterised Lord Palmerston's administration of foreign affairs, but also because it was generally expected that his removal would speedily draw after it the dissolution of the ministry. The queen's speech showed that the premier had not forgotten the pledges he had given on the subject of parliamentary reform, for it intimated an intention on the part of the government to propose "such amendments in the act of the late reign relating to the representation of the commons in parliament as may be deemed calculated to carry into more complete effect the principles upon which that law was founded." Lord J. Russell lost no time in producing the promised measure. He asked leave to bring in his bill on the 9th of February, thus showing a sincere desire to carry it through the House in the course of the session. It is needless to enter into an examination of the details of a scheme the provisions of which were never discussed. It will suffice to say that Lord J. Russell proposed to enfranchise some large towns, disfranchise some small boroughs, to lower the borough and county qualifications, to strike out the words "on the true faith of a Christian" from the oath taken by members of parliament, thereby removing the obstacle to the admission of Jews to the legislature, and to abolish the rule in virtue of which members of the government transferred from one office to another vacated their seats

This measure was not very favourably received either by the House or the country. It did not satisfy the hopes and expectations

of ardent reformers; it alarmed those who thought that the electoral qualification was already too low. However, leave was given for its introduction without opposition.

Meanwhile, the public curiosity with regard to Lord Palmerston's dismissal was gratified by very full statements made by the prime minister, and by Lord Palmerston himself, who, from being one of the ablest members of the administration, became its most formidable opponent.

The change which had taken place in France caused much alarm in England. It was feared that Napoleon might seek to strengthen his position by yielding to the popular feeling in favour of a war with England to avenge the disaster of Waterloo; and there was consequently a very general demand for measures of defence and precaution. The government was so far influenced by the popular outcry as to make an effort to strengthen the force of the country in such a manner as would involve the least possible expenditure consistent with efficiency; and with this view they determined to recommend such an organization of the militia as would in their opinion enable them to meet any attack that might be contemplated. The ministerial plan was brought forward and explained to the House of Commons by Lord J. Russell on the 16th of February. Though some members of the House, such as Mr. Hume and Mr. Cobden, opposed the scheme on economical grounds, and others, like Messrs. Reynolds and O'Connell, objected to the omission of Ireland from the bill, yet on the whole it met with a favourable reception; and Lord Palmerston in particular distinguished himself by the heartiness of the approbation he gave to it, only objecting to its being made a local militia, and suggesting that the word "local" should be omitted in the bill. Subsequently he moved the insertion of the words "and consolidate," and the substitution of "regular" for "local." The consequences of this amendment gave it an importance which would not otherwise have belonged to it. It was carried by a majority of eleven, and Lord J. Russell at once resigned. It was generally, and naturally, expected that the leader of the opposition would take his place, and therefore it excited neither surprise nor emotion when it was announced that Lord Stanley, who, in consequence of the death of his father in 1851, had now become Earl of Derby, had been sent for by the Queen, and had accepted the task of endeavouring to form an administration.

On the 27th February the new first lord of the treasury declared to the peers the principles on which his administration was to be conducted. They were, with regard to foreign nations, absolute

non-intervention; with regard to defence, the maintenance of the present military and naval force, which he believed to be sufficient for the protection of the country and its numerous colonies; and the organization of the militia as a precaution against invasion. He promised to protect political refugees, but warned them against abusing the hospitality of this country by organizing against their own governments measures in violation of the laws of England. On financial questions he spoke with a vagueness necessitated by the position occupied by his cabinet in face of a hostile majority in the popular branch of the legislature. But he made this very significant remark: "When the entire supply of an article comes from abroad the whole increase of the price falls on the consumer, but that is not the case when the article is partly of foreign and partly of home supply, and I will not shrink from declaring my opinion that there is no reason why corn should be the solitary exception to the rule." The new premier stated that he did not intend to take up the measure of franchise reform, which had been proposed by the late government: a measure which, in his opinion, unsettled everything and settled nothing, and declared that he was favourable to the extension of a system of religious education based on the study of the Scriptures. He said that to uphold the Established Church in its integrity was the interest and duty of the government. Relying on the assistance of God, he would endeavour to promote the social, moral, and religious improvement of the country.

The only part of this programme which called forth any animadversion was that which touched on the question of raising a revenue on corn. It elicited a protest from Earl Grey, and a declaration from Lord Aberdeen that, as the intimate friend and colleague of the late Sir R. Peel, it was his determination to adhere to the free-trade policy of that statesman by opposing any duty whatsoever on corn, whether for revenue or protection. These protests were not confined to the walls of parliament. The members of the defunct Anti-corn-law League met in Manchester, and determined to resuscitate that body and to prepare for a vigorous renewal of the agitation in case a serious attempt should be made by the new government to reverse the free-trade policy which the legislature and the country had adopted. On the 15th of March Mr. C. Villiers interrogated Mr. Disraeli, as the leader of the ministerial party in the House of Commons, on the subject, and similar questions were put to the Earl of Derby in the House of Lords. The reply to these questions was to the effect, that the

government did not intend to propose any return to the policy of protection during the present session, nor at any future time, unless a great majority of members favourable to that policy should be returned to parliament. Another interrogation, made some days later, elicited an intimation that the government intended to dissolve in the course of the year, and not later than the autumn.

The new cabinet numbered among its members, in addition to the Earl of Derby, Mr. Disraeli, who became chancellor of the exchequer, Lord Cranbourne, and Mr. Walpole.

The question which had proved fatal to the late administration demanded the prompt and careful consideration of the new government. A militia bill was therefore prepared, and introduced into the House of Commons on the 25th of March by the new secretary of state. On the motion for the second reading, which was made on the 23rd of April, an important debate took place, and was continued over two nights. Sir De Lacy Evans moved that it should be read a second time that day six months, and this motion was supported by Lord J. Russell and his adherents; but the bill was defended by Lord Palmerston, Mr. Sidney Herbert, as well as by the conservative party generally, and the second reading carried by 355 to 165. This majority, larger than even the most sanguine supporters of the government had ventured to hope for, greatly strengthened its position, and caused many who were wavering in their allegiance to the Whig leader to give it their assistance. The division on the third reading, however, was much closer. It was carried by 187 votes to 142. In the Upper House there was no serious opposition. The success was partly due to the authority of the Duke of Wellington, who urged the acceptance of the measure as necessary to the maintenance of what he declared the country had not possessed during the last ten years—a proper peace establishment.

As the government had so distinctly declined to deal with the question of parliamentary reform, it was taken up by Mr. Hume, who proposed a considerable extension of the franchise; by Mr. Locke King, who proposed the assimilation of the franchise in the counties to that in the boroughs; by Lord Brougham, who proposed the shortening to thirty days of the interval between the dissolution of one parliament and the meeting of the next. The two first of these propositions were rejected by large majorities, the other was carried. The new government brought in a bill for the disfranchisement of St. Albans, a borough which had been proved to have been the scene of gross corruption; it also carried forward a measure

originally introduced by the late government, empowering the crown to send a commission of inquiry to any place at which it was reported by an election committee that bribery was extensively practised; and the bill passed with some amendments which the Lords had introduced into it. A bill giving a new constitution to the colony of New Zealand was also passed, notwithstanding the energetic opposition of Sir W. Molesworth. Bills for the extension of the episcopal church in the colonies, and for the better management of bishops' estates and revenues mis-carried. The Maynooth question, raised again by Mr. Spooner, was fully discussed, and quietly dropped. Motions by Mr. Gibson for the repeal of the paper, advertisement, and stamp duties were rejected.

Lord J. Russell had declared that the state of public business was such as would not warrant him in resorting to a dissolution at the time when he found himself in a minority. Lord Derby was of the same opinion, but, as soon as the necessary business of the session had been transacted, parliament was dissolved.

The new parliament assembled on the 4th of November, re-elected its Speaker, and occupied itself with the swearing-in of its members and other preliminaries till the 11th of that month, when the session was opened by the Queen in person. The result of the appeal to the country had little altered the balance of parties in the House of Commons, and consequently left the government in a hopeless minority. A clever and elaborate system of finance brought forward by Mr. Disraeli, and recommended by all the ability and eloquence of which he was master, was rudely handled by Mr. Gladstone, and rejected by a majority of 305 to 236. Ministers, who of course anticipated this defeat, at once resigned. The Earl of Aberdeen then formed a new cabinet, of which Mr. Gladstone, Lord Palmerston, Lord J. Russell, the Duke of Newcastle, Sir J. Graham, Earl Granville, the Duke of Argyle, Mr. Sidney Herbert, Sir Charles Wood, Sir W. Molesworth, and the Marquis of Lansdowne, were members.

During the interval between the dissolution and the re-assembling of parliament, an event occurred which deeply stirred the heart of the whole nation, from the Queen on the throne to the lowest and meanest of her subjects. The Duke of Wellington, who had attained to the 84th year of his age, had for some time past been becoming more and more infirm. On the 14th of September his feebleness had very perceptibly increased, and at about a quarter-past three in the afternoon of that day he tranquilly breathed his last at Walmer Castle, where he was then residing. The qualities which caused

him to be regarded with deep reverence and admiration made his decease to be deeply, sincerely, and generally regretted.

A public funeral was proposed by the government, and unanimously decreed by the legislature. The procession was planned, marshalled, and carried out, with a discretion, a judgment, and a good taste, which reflected the highest honour on the civil and military authorities by whom it was directed. Men of every arm and of every regiment in the service, for the first time in the history of the British army, marched together on this occasion. But what was more admirable still was the conduct of the mass of sympathetic spectators, amounting, as was computed, to a million and a half, who had congregated from all parts of the kingdom. From Grosvenor Gate to St. Paul's Cathedral there was not one foot of unoccupied ground; not a balcony, not a window, that was not filled; and, as far as could be observed, every face amidst that vast multitude wore an expression of respectful sorrow. An unbroken silence was maintained as the funeral cortège moved slowly forward to the mausoleum prepared to receive the remains of England's greatest warrior in the centre of the stupendous masterpiece of Wren's architectural genius.

The recess continued till the 10th of February. Various questions occupied the attention of the legislature, without exciting much general interest, or producing any very appreciable result: persecution of Protestants in Tuscany; the state of our relations with France; the consideration of an address which the city of London had sent to the French Emperor, and in which it was accused of trenching on the functions of the government; a motion for inquiring into the education afforded to the students of Maynooth College. A bill dealing with the clergy reserves of Canada, in accordance with the wishes and recommendations of the colonial legislature, was fully discussed in both Houses, and adopted after a sharp struggle. The question of Jewish disabilities was again decided in favour of the Jews by the Commons, and against them by the Lords. An important bill on the subject of education was introduced and dropped by the government.

On the 8th of April Mr. Gladstone, as chancellor of the exchequer, brought forward a plan for the reduction of the national debt, which he submitted to the House in fifteen resolutions. It consisted of three portions. By the first he proposed to liquidate certain minor stocks—the South-Sea stock, the old and new South-Sea annuities, Bank annuities of 1726, and three-per-cent. annuities of 1751—the total amount of which stocks was about 9,500,000*l.*,

made up of stocks which differed only in denomination, and thus perpetuated a needless complication in the debt. He proposed that these stocks should be converted into new securities or paid off at the option of the holders; and he calculated that if by this operation the interest on these sums was reduced by a quarter per cent., the permanent annual saving to the country would be 25,000*l.* per annum, and that if the stocks were paid off, the saving would be still greater. His next proposal was to operate on exchequer bonds in such a way as would secure, if his anticipations should be fulfilled, a saving of one per cent. The third part of his plan was to effect the voluntary commutation of the three-per-cent. consols, and the three-per-cent. reduced, amounting altogether to 500,000,000*l.*, into one or other of two new stocks which he proposed to create, and which would be as like each other as possible in their conditions, so that the fundholders would probably be induced to take portions of both. This plan was criticised favourably by Mr. Hume and several members of the radical party, and unfavourably by Mr. Disraeli and some of his principal followers, but the resolutions were adopted. On the 18th of April the chancellor of the exchequer made his financial statement in a speech of great ability, which, though occupying five hours in the delivery, was listened to from its commencement to its close with unflagging interest.

The revenue of the financial year, which Mr. Disraeli had estimated at 51,625,000*l.*, really amounted to 53,089,000*l.*; the expenditure, estimated at 51,163,000*l.*, had, in fact, only reached the sum of 50,782,000*l.*, thus leaving a surplus of 2,460,000*l.* Before considering how much of this amount would be available for the remission of taxation, it was necessary to announce the calculated expenditure for the year just commenced, which amounted to 52,183,000*l.*; so that three-fifths of the surplus was already disposed of. Mr. Gladstone estimated the amount of the revenue for the year 1853—4, at 52,990,000*l.*, giving an apparent surplus of 807,000*l.*; but he urged that, on account of the uncertainty of some of the items, it would be better to take it at 700,000*l.*, and of this sum 220,000*l.* consisted of money which did not proceed from permanent or recurring sources. Mr. Gladstone next considered the question of the retention of the income tax. He pointed out what great things it had enabled the government and the legislature to effect, and how much loss, and how heavy an accumulation of debt, would have been avoided if it had been resorted to at an earlier period. Speaking no doubt with a mental reference to impending dangers,

he exclaimed, "It affords you the means, should unhappily hostilities again break out, of at once raising your army to 300,000, and your fleet to 100,000, with all your establishments in proportion: and much as may be said of the importance—in which I concur—of an army reserve and a navy reserve, I say this fiscal reserve is no less important; for if it be used aright, it is an engine to which you may resort, and with which, judiciously employed, you may again, if need be, defy the world." This apostrophe elicited a tremendous cheer of approbation, which was not without a political significance. Mr. Gladstone next entered upon a very full and detailed examination of the proposal, so often urged, to draw a distinction between precarious and realized incomes, and between incomes derived from trades and from professions, and he exhibited very clearly the almost absolute impossibility of drawing in practice the distinction which was contended for. The government proposed to renew the tax for two years from April, 1853, at the then rate of 7*d.* in the pound, and for two years more from April, 1855, at 6*d.* in the pound, and from April, 1857, for three years more at 5*d.* in the pound; so that it would expire altogether on the 5th of April, 1860. But in order to enable ministers to accompany the present renewal of the tax with a farther relief from taxation, it was proposed to make it more productive by extending it down to a class of persons who were exempt from it. Hitherto the tax had only been paid by persons whose incomes amounted to 150*l.*; henceforth an income tax of 5*d.* in the pound was to be imposed on persons whose incomes were between 100*l.* and 150*l.* for the whole time that the tax was to be continued. Ireland had profited largely by the remission of taxation which the income tax had enabled the government to make, it was therefore very reasonably determined that Ireland should at length be made subject to the tax, and it was expected that an additional annual sum of 460,000*l.* would thus be obtained. By alterations he proposed to make in the legacy duties, Mr. Gladstone expected to realize 500,000*l.* for the year 1853—4, and no less than two millions for the year 1856—7, and this would probably become a part of the permanent revenue of the kingdom. He brought forward certain specified changes in the duties on Scotch and Irish spirits, and proposed to relieve Ireland from the consolidated annuities, amounting to 4,500,000*l.* Mr. Gladstone next entered on the more agreeable task of announcing the taxes he hoped to remit. In the first place, he contemplated the entire remission of the duties on soap, which would involve a net loss of revenue amounting to 1,111,000*l.*, and for the

current year of 771,000*l.* He would reduce the tax on life assurances from 2*s.* 6*d.* to 6*d.* He intended to substitute a uniform penny receipt stamp in the place of stamps varying according to the sum received. The duty on apprenticeship was lowered from 20*s.* to 2*s.* 6*d.* Reductions were also made in the taxes on solicitors' certificates and the articles of apprenticeship of solicitors' clerks, on hackney and other carriages, horses, dogs, post-horses, tea; in a word, 133 different taxes were to be reduced, and the total amount of the remissions of taxation which it was proposed to make was estimated at 5,384,000*l.* Four days before Mr. Gladstone made his statement, a motion made by Mr. Milner Gibson, one of the representatives of Manchester, for the abolition of the advertisement duty, had been carried against the government by a majority of 31. Mr. Gladstone announced that, before Mr. Gibson's motion was brought forward, the government had determined to reduce the advertisement duty from 1*s.* 6*d.* to 6*d.*, and to repeal altogether the duty on newspaper supplements; and to this determination they adhered, in spite of the majority on Mr. Gibson's resolution. Mr. Gladstone entered into an elaborate statement of calculations leading to the conclusion that there was a reasonable prospect of getting rid of the income tax in 1860. He then concluded the largest, ablest, and most closely reasoned financial statement ever laid before the House with the following words:—

"These are the proposals of the government. They may be approved, or they may be condemned, but I have this full confidence that it will be admitted that we have not sought to evade the difficulties of the position; that we have not concealed those difficulties either from ourselves or from others; that we have not attempted to counteract them by narrow or flimsy expedients; that we have prepared plans which, if you will adopt them, will go some way to close up many vexed financial questions, which, if not now settled, may be attended with public inconvenience, and even with public danger, in future years, and under less favourable circumstances; that we have endeavoured in the plans we have now submitted to you to make the path of our successors in future years not more arduous; and, I may be permitted to add that, while we have sought to do justice to the great labour community of England by furthering their relief from indirect taxation, we have not been guided by any desire to put one class against another; we have felt we should best maintain our own honour, that we should best meet the views of parliament, and best promote the interests of the country, by declining to draw any invidious distinction between

class and class, by adopting it to ourselves as a sacred aim to diffuse and distribute the burdens with equal and impartial hand; and we have the consolation of believing that by proposals such as these we contribute, as far as in us lies, not only to develop the material resources of the country, but to knit the various parts of this great nation yet more closely than ever to that throne and to those institutions under which it is our happiness to live."

The various parts of the large and carefully prepared plan of the chancellor of the exchequer were successively discussed, especially the income tax. Messrs. Hume and Cobden argued for such a reduction in the expenditure of the country as would render the impost unnecessary; and Mr. Disraeli complained that the project of the chancellor of the exchequer was conceived in a spirit of injustice to the land. On a division the numbers were—

For the government plan	..	...	..	..	323
Against	..	...	...	...	252
Majority for ministers					71

No sooner was this general question decided than Mr. Lawless moved that the words "Great Britain" should be substituted for "United Kingdom;" an alteration which would have had the effect of maintaining the exemption from the income tax which Ireland had hitherto enjoyed. In answer to the plea of continued distress, which was urged in favour of the maintenance of this exemption, it was justly replied, that those who were in distress would still be exempted, and only those who had incomes of more than 100*l.* would be liable to the tax. A long and almost riotous discussion followed; but the amendment was rejected, as were also several others of less importance. The recommendations of the chancellor of the exchequer, supported by a strong majority indoors, and wafted forward by a favourable breeze of popular confidence from without, were carried, with such modifications only as their author saw reason to admit. It was felt by all classes throughout the country that its financial operations were directed by a master-hand: that the work which Peel had so ably commenced was being carried out by Gladstone with a bold originality of conception and a happy force and eloquence of expression, which placed him fully on a level with the lamented statesman whose work he was endeavouring to complete. The people therefore submitted cheerfully to the burden of a heavy and oppressive tax, in the full conviction that its continuance was necessary in order to enable

the chancellor of the exchequer to place the national finances on a footing which would increase the wealth and promote the welfare of all classes.

The session of 1853 was remarkable not only on account of these great and important financial reforms, but also for a legislative activity, strikingly contrasting with the legislative indolence of the two preceding sessions. Several important bills, among which we may mention a bill altering the law of transportation, and introducing the ticket-of-leave system, were carried. But the most important measure of the session was a bill for the future government of India, introduced and explained to the House of Commons by Sir C. Wood, in a speech which occupied five hours in its delivery. It was justly complained by Mr. Bright that the bill did not go far enough; that it only modified, and to some extent improved, a system of divided government, which ought to be altogether abolished. However, it was felt that if the bill did not go far enough the alterations proposed were unquestionable improvements, and they were adopted.

But if this session was marked by a considerable amount of legislative work, it was by no means free from legislative failures. A Jewish disabilities bill met with its accustomed fate, so, too, did a proposal for the improvement of the law of church rates; and in connection with this it may be mentioned that church rates virtually received their death-blow by the sentence of the House of Lords finally deciding the Brantree case in favour of those who appealed from the judgment of the court below, which had decided that a minority of parishioners might lay a rate against the will of the majority. A bill introduced by Mr. Chambers for the recovery of the liberty of persons confined in monastic and conventual establishments was opposed by the government on the ground that it proposed to interfere with those institutions in a manner calculated to give just offence to the Roman Catholics. In the course of the debate on this measure Lord John Russell, speaking as the leader of the House, let fall some expressions which gave great offence to a large number of Roman Catholic members, and caused Messrs. Monsell, Keogh, and Sadler, who held subordinate offices in the ministry, to tender their resignations, on the ground that they could not honourably continue to serve under a government whose organ in the House of Commons had cast such offensive imputations on their religion. Thereupon Lord Aberdeen stated that he himself and many of his colleagues did not share the sentiments that Lord J.

Russell had expressed in his speech, and at his request the three gentleman withdrew their resignations.

Never, perhaps, had the condition and prospects of the nation been more satisfactory than they were during the later months of 1853. The parliamentary session had been fruitful of important measures. The ministry appeared to command general confidence, and to be likely to remain in office for a long time; the finances, under the able administration of Mr. Gladstone, were in a condition of progressive improvement; trade and manufactures were flourishing in almost all their departments. It was true that the harvest was not as abundant as could be desired; but its shortcomings were, to a great extent, compensated by the freeness with which supplies of corn could now be drawn from all parts of the world. The nation seemed to be entering on a period of unbounded prosperity and progress; but a dark cloud was slowly rising in the East, and casting its ominous shadows on the fair prospect.

During the period which had elapsed since the beginning of the fifteenth century, Russia had been running a career of eventful, but, on the whole, successful aggression and aggrandizement. At its commencement Russia consisted of the duchy of Moscow; but the sovereigns of that nucleus of future empire had pushed their conquests in every direction until they had acquired a territory thirty times larger than that which had originally belonged to them. Immense tracts of country had been torn from Turkey, Persia, Sweden, and Poland; large nationalities had been incorporated into the dominions of the Czar, who governed this prodigious empire with despotic power.

In addition to this vast and continually extending temporal kingdom, the Czar claimed to himself a still wider spiritual dominion. He was the pontiff of the Russo-Greek church, exercising an authority like that claimed by the Pope, not only over his own subjects, but over numerous co-religionists in Greece, Turkey, and elsewhere; and he used his enormous political power to strengthen this spiritual authority. It was this claim that was the cause, or the pretext, of the events we have now to relate.

They had their source in a miserable squabble between Latin and Greek monks about what were called the holy sites—that is to say, the places which were traditionally regarded as the scenes of the Saviour's birth and sufferings. The chief object of contention was the possession of the key of the great door of the church at Bethlehem and the right to place a silver star

in the cave or grotto in which it was alleged that the Saviour of the world was born, and which was covered by the sacred edifice. The Latins had already a key of a small door; but they desired to possess a key of the large door. Unfortunately, the cause of the Greeks was supported by Russia, while that of the Latins was patronized by the French government; each endeavouring by negotiations with the Porte to obtain the triumph of the party whose cause it espoused. The Russian government in all probability cared little about the squabble, and the French government nothing at all. But political considerations led both parties to press the matter with an earnestness out of all proportion to its real importance. The Russian emperor was not disposed to yield an inch to the new French government, which he had reluctantly and ungraciously recognized; and the French emperor durst not allow himself to be humiliated by the Czar. He knew that in upholding the claims of the Latins he was maintaining a cause dear to the majority of the French Catholics; and that nothing would be more likely to procure him the support of the people of France, and especially the liberal party of that country, now hostile to him, than a firm attitude towards Russia. He knew that the French in general had not forgotten the disastrous retreat from Moscow, and that the French liberals in particular had neither forgotten nor forgiven the partition of Poland. However trifling, therefore, or unimportant the question between him and the Russian emperor might be, he had the strongest possible motives for carrying his resistance to the extremity of drawing the sword. There is, however, no reason to suppose that the French emperor was anxious for war. He seems, on the contrary, to have used every effort to bring the contest to a peaceful and honourable termination; but, having once entered into the contention, he could not easily draw back.

The Sultan and his advisers, placed between these powerful antagonists, did their best to please both. They, of course, viewed the contest with Gallic-like indifference. They would gladly have given twenty keys, if by that means they could have satisfied the contending parties. But the polite contempt of the Mussulman was no match for the contentious obstinacy and wrong-headedness of the hostile Christians. The Turk wanted to keep out of the dispute; but the Latins and Greeks each pressed him to take their side. Unfortunately, in his anxiety to avoid offending either of the two parties he had recourse to artifices which offended both. As the negotiations between the three parties were being carried on,

the question of the holy sites unfortunately became complicated with the still more dangerous question of the protectorate which the Czar claimed over the Greek Christians in Turkey; and this claim he pressed in the hope of obtaining, at the expense of Turkey, an extension of his already vast dominions, and an increase of his prodigious power; and, trusting in his proximity to Turkey, and the distance at which France was placed from it, he was disposed to disregard the remonstrances of the French government.

At the same time he was anxious to secure the neutrality of England, knowing that the English government considered itself bound by strong motives of interest, as well as by treaty obligations, to uphold the integrity of the Turkish empire. Therefore, on the 9th of January, 1853, he began to sound Sir Hamilton Seymour, the British minister at St. Petersburg, on the subject, and he referred to it from time to time in a series of confidential conversations, in which he said that the "sick man"—meaning the Turkish government—was dying, that it was, in fact, falling to pieces, and that some event was sure shortly to occur that would cause its dissolution. He did not desire that it should occur; but he could not prevent it, and he urged that they ought to be prepared for the event. He did not want any agreement or treaty to be entered into on the subject, but such an understanding as would be binding among gentlemen. He was confident that if he could only have ten minutes' conversation with Lord Aberdeen he could bring him over to his views. He said that he did not want Constantinople himself, and that he would not allow any other of the Great Powers to have it; but he was willing to allow England to take Egypt and the island of Candia; and he left it to be understood that in return we were to allow him to take some portion of the spoils of Turkey. Such were the chief topics of various conversations which he had with Sir Hamilton Seymour. To these overtures Sir Hamilton constantly replied, in accordance with the uniform policy of the British government, that he must decline to enter into any consideration of an eventuality which had not yet occurred, and deprecated discussions which had a tendency to bring about the catastrophe to which they related.

Baffled in this attempt to bring over the British government to his views, the Czar appeared for a time to have frankly abandoned his projects, and to be desirous of bringing the matter in dispute between himself and the Sultan to an amicable settlement. Accordingly, he allowed a difference which had arisen with regard to the Christians of Montenegro to be arranged through the friendly inter-

vention of the Austrian government, which was deeply interested in averting a war. Unfortunately these pacific intentions did not last long. The Czar determined to despatch an ambassador to Constantinople, and pitched on Prince Menschikoff. It would hardly have been possible for him to have made a more unfortunate choice. The prince was a soldier rather than a diplomatist; a man of violent temper and dictatorial demeanour, and who acted as if he had been sent to foment the existing quarrel. He came with a display of military and naval power which showed that he was entrusted with the means of supporting his negotiations, if needful, by force. His whole behaviour was that of a man who had come with the determination of picking a quarrel with the Power to which he was sent. One of his first steps was to inflict an insult on Fuad Effendi, one of the Sultan's ministers, which forced him to resign. His whole behaviour was of so haughty and menacing a character, that it produced a panic among the Sultan's ministers, who, in their terror, appealed to Colonel Rose, then acting as *chargé d'affaires* in the absence of Sir Stratford Canning, the British ambassador. He took upon himself to order the Mediterranean fleet to come up to Volay, so as to be within reach, in case, as was feared, the Russian fleet should menace Constantinople. But Admiral Dundas, who commanded the British fleet, refused to obey the order, and it was disavowed by the English government. The knowledge that the order had been given greatly provoked the Czar; but his anger was assuaged when he learned the true state of the case. It was again roused by the news that the French government had sent its fleet to Salamis. Meanwhile, Prince Menschikoff, having obtained a settlement of the question of the holy places, was still demanding the protectorate of the Greek church throughout the Turkish dominions. He offered the Sultan the alliance of Russia, and promised a fleet and 400,000 men to support him against the Western Powers in case they should attempt to interfere with the proposed arrangement. He also insisted that these negotiations should be concealed from France and England. The Turk was far too afraid of his gigantic and aggressive neighbour to put himself thus entirely into his hands; and, though it would seem that some half-promise of secrecy had been given, the demands of Russia were divulged.

It was at this stage of the negotiations that Sir Stratford Canning, who had been absent from his post for nearly two years, returned to Constantinople. His influence there was immense. To a noble and commanding presence he added the advantage of a

long residence in the Turkish capital, which had given him a more thorough acquaintance with all the questions at issue, and a greater skill in treating them, than any other living man possessed; but this very circumstance enabled him to guide the policy of the government which he represented, even when he seemed to be most faithfully following out his intentions. The return of this able diplomatist to Constantinople was certainly unfortunate, because he was personally offensive to the Russian emperor, who had already inflicted on him the insult of refusing to receive him as ambassador. There is, however, no reason for supposing that the English ambassador allowed himself to be drawn aside from the path of duty by a desire to mortify the man who had thus insulted him. It is certain that on many occasions he addressed to the government of the Sultan counsels of moderation and prudence that they would have done well to follow. But though he appears to have conducted himself throughout the negotiations in a manner worthy of the representative of the British nation, this did not prevent the Russian emperor from suspecting that the adroit and skilful resistance which the Turkish government opposed to his demands was secretly inspired by the man whom he regarded as his mortal enemy, and by whom his diplomatic intrigues had been repeatedly foiled. Sir Stratford had been raised to the peerage by the title of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, and thus came back invested with greater dignity than ever, an object of wondering awe and admiration to the Turks. He lost no time in entering into negotiations for the settlement of the question of the holy places with the French ambassador, who represented the Latin church, and the Russian ambassador, who represented the Greek church; and by his skilful management he brought about an arrangement which wounded the susceptibilities of neither party. Thus, on the 22nd of April, he had succeeded in removing altogether the original cause of the quarrel between the Czar and the Sultan.

But the former of these personages was deeply offended at the movement which the French fleet had been ordered to make, and which gave to the agreement about the holy places the appearance of a concession extorted by a menace. It was indeed too late to undo what had been done; but the provocation made him more punctilious, more exacting, and less ready to listen to reason on the still unsettled question of the protectorate. On this point Prince Menschikoff was therefore instructed to insist strongly; and, in order to enforce the demand, a large Russian force was gathering on the banks of the Pruth, and the Sebastopol fleet was prepared

for sea. Prince Menschikoff, as might have been expected from his character, carried out his instructions in a very arrogant and dictatorial manner. The ministers of the Sultan, advised by the English and French ambassadors, replied in language of studied courtesy and moderation; and thus, meeting unreasonable demands offensively urged with temperate firmness, they made Turkey to appear to the world more completely in the right, and Russia more completely in the wrong, than they really were.

While these things were being done, the Great Powers of Europe were seriously disquieted. Austria and Prussia especially had a much stronger interest in restraining the aggressive ambition of Russia than France or England; but they were less able to show directly their disposition to do so, because in the event of a war they were directly exposed to the attacks of that gigantic power. Accordingly the representatives of England, France, Austria, and Prussia, held a congress at Vienna, and laboured to bring about an accommodation. They all agreed in the opinion that the Turkish government was right in the view it had taken of the question at issue; and they deputed the Austrian ambassador to make a last effort to avert the threatened attack on Turkey. The effort was unsuccessful; but it had the effect of placing the Russian ambassador more completely and conspicuously in the wrong. He broke off all negotiations, took down the Russian arms from the embassy, and quitted Constantinople. From this moment England was gradually drifting into war with Russia. The part her ambassador had taken in encouraging the resistance offered by the Porte to the demands of Russia, imposed on our government the duty of trying to shield Turkey from the consequences of conduct which we had to a certain extent counselled. It was hoped that Russia, finding how strongly her conduct was condemned by the public opinion of Europe, would draw back; and so, almost up to the last moment, those who enjoyed the best opportunities of insight into what was going on, incessantly repeated that there would be no war, nothing but an armed demonstration. However, to guard against the possible contingency of a sudden attack on Constantinople, the English and French governments, acting cordially together, ordered their combined fleets to enter the Dardanelles, and to be ready to obey any summons they might receive from their respective ambassadors at Constantinople. On the 3rd of May, Count Nesselrode, on behalf of the Czar, wrote a letter urging the Porte to accept without variation the note of Prince Menschikoff, and threatening that if the demand were not

complied with within eight days the Russian army would endeavour to enforce it. At the time when this demand was received the combined fleets were anchored in Besika Bay, at the mouth of the Dardanelles; and the government of the Sultan, encouraged no doubt by its proximity, returned a firm but very courteous refusal to the Russian demands. Thereupon the emperor ordered his troops to enter the Danubian Principalities, and on the 2nd of July they crossed the Pruth; their general assumed the government of the Principalities, and enlisted a few soldiers in them. This was a very rash and ill-advised proceeding. The invading army was thus put between the armies of Turkey on the south and those of Austria on the north and west, which might have been encouraged by promises of support from England and France to attack the Russians in the rear and flank, while the Turks assailed them in the front. Besides, the Czar, by occupying provinces of Turkey without actually declaring war, gave that power the opportunity of choosing her own time to attack the invading army. This step, as might have been anticipated, was strongly disapproved by the four Great Powers; nevertheless, they advised the Sultan not to treat it for the present as a *casus belli*, but to hasten his preparations in such a way as to be able to meet the Russian army in case the outrage should be persisted in. At the same time they addressed to Russia a collective protest against the occupation of the Principalities; and hopes were still entertained that war would be averted. With this object in view the English ambassador drew up a note, to which he obtained the assent of the Turkish government. It was transmitted to Vienna, where the congress was sitting, but they, believing that it would not be accepted by the Czar, substituted for it another which it was ascertained that he would accept, and for which they endeavoured also to obtain the acceptance of the Turkish government. But the Porte was of opinion that this note contained expressions which virtually conceded the question of the protectorate, and therefore proposed certain modifications of the note, which the Czar would not accept.

Meanwhile, in Russia and Turkey the war-feeling was spreading, and was rapidly assuming that character which a dispute between two ignorant and fanatical populations might be expected to take. In the churches of Russia and the mosques of Turkey a crusade was preached with the most vehement enthusiasm. The two governments were pushed forward by the religious enthusiasm of the two nations, and it soon became evident that the continuance of the Russian troops in the Principalities must lead to a war, and

yet their withdrawal was daily becoming more difficult. In a short time the popular feeling in Turkey had become such that the Turkish government had to choose between war or a revolution certain to be followed by war. Under these circumstances it decided for war.

But it was not in Turkey only that the intelligence of the occupation of the Principalities roused a strong popular feeling. It was condemned throughout Europe. Indignation against Russian insolence and Russian ambition prevailed everywhere, and nowhere more strongly than in England and France; so that at the moment when the Russian and Turkish governments were pushed forward by the populations they respectively governed, Lord Aberdeen and his colleagues had no other choice than that of either supporting Turkey against Russia, or resigning. But even this alternative was hardly open to them. The state of parties in the House of Commons was such as to render the formation of another ministry almost impossible; and Lord Aberdeen, after having presided over the negotiations which had been carried on up to the moment when war seemed imminent, could not honourably escape from the responsibility in which he was placed. Besides, his continuance in power seemed to afford the best chance of peace; for of all those who at that time were at all likely to be invited to take office in any administration that might be formed he was the one—with perhaps the exception of his colleague, Mr. Gladstone—who was most strongly opposed to war, and most resolutely determined to exhaust every means of conciliation before resorting to that last and greatest of evils. In the state in which the public opinion of England then was, his resignation must have at once led to the formation of a war ministry. He therefore sorrowfully and unwillingly remained at his post, drifting towards war, but struggling with all his force against the impulse that carried him along.

But if the position of the English government at this moment was delicate and difficult, that of the French government was still more so. It did not possess the means of resisting the popular feeling against Russia that belonged to the older and more consolidated government of this country, and therefore, while it was carried towards war at a greater speed, the Emperor was less disposed to stem the war torrent. It soon became evident to the people of this country that our government was lagging behind that of France, and was being dragged forward by her in a question which seemed to concern us much more nearly than our neighbours on the other side of the Channel. Yielding to the pressure thus

brought on him from all sides, Lord Clarendon ordered the English fleet to proceed to Constantinople, in violation of the letter of a treaty made in 1841. It was indeed urged that Russia had broken that treaty; but, as Turkey had not at this moment declared war, we had taken a step that was premature and unnecessary, even in the opinion of our own ambassador, who was certainly not disposed to lean to the side of Russia. Thus the *entraînement* of the French people and government acting on our government had led to another hostile step.

While things were in this state, an event occurred which stimulated the war-feeling in England and France almost to the pitch of frenzy. A squadron of Turkish ships stationed at Sinope was attacked by a very superior Russian naval force. The Turkish ships made a gallant defence, but were soon destroyed; a great part of Sinope was battered down, and it was reported that 4000 men had been killed. The tidings of this terrible vengeance produced a strong feeling in England; but Lord Aberdeen still stood out firmly against action which he feared would lead to war. Several of his colleagues, on the other hand, and especially Lord Palmerston, urged him to adopt a decisive course. A cabinet council was held as soon as the news of the disaster arrived; but the party of peace prevailed, and the ministers separated without having come to any resolution. Lord Palmerston then resigned, avowedly because the government intended to introduce a reform bill, really because he considered that a more vigorous policy ought to be adopted towards Russia. The press strongly urged a more decided course; the government yielded, and it was determined that the British fleet should enter the Black Sea, for the purpose of protecting the Turks, in order to which they were to compel all armed Russian vessels to retire into the harbour of Sebastopol. The adoption of this measure satisfied Lord Palmerston, and he remained in office.

Thus England, under the influence of panic and passion, was being propelled and precipitated into a war which all reasonable men desired to avoid, and which by judicious management might have been avoided. And what was the reason of this? The chief cause, it appears to me, is to be found in that secret and mysterious system of diplomacy, which did not prevent the English people from seeing much of what was going on, but which did not allow them to see the whole truth; which revealed to them the faults of the Russian Emperor, but cast a mantle over the nearly equal faults of the Turkish government, which led the English to regard the Czar as a monster of perfidy and ambition, when he really was a

proud but well-intentioned man, blinded by passion and fanaticism. If the whole truth had been clearly seen, the people of this country would probably have abstained from urging forward the government with that passionate vehemence which enabled the war party in the legislature and the cabinet to overcome the humane and prudent resistance of the prime minister. But the people saw the occupation of the provinces, the tragedy of Sinope, and other violent and foolish acts of the Russian government as through a lurid haze, and thus Lord Aberdeen was driven towards a policy which he thoroughly abhorred. "Here I am," he exclaimed to his intimate friends, in the bitterness of his heart, "with one foot in the grave, placed against my will at the head of the ministry, and forced on to that bloodshed against which, throughout the whole of my public career, I have hitherto successfully struggled;" and the old man wrung his hands in an agony of impotent despair. Like the doomed vessel which has entered the vortex of the Maelstrom, he was being drifted into WAR.

CHAPTER XIII.

SEBASTOPOL.

WE are now entering on a period which presents some very marked contrasts with those that preceded it. The prospect of a great European war turned men's thoughts from those important organic changes which had so strongly stirred their minds; and, after the return of peace, those changes were regarded in a different light. The working classes were still as resolved to obtain the franchise as they had been in the palmiest days of the Charter, and they possessed much greater power of enforcing their claim to it. But they pressed it less eagerly, because they rightly felt that social and moral changes which were within their reach were more needed and more likely to benefit them than political changes. And though the majority of the upper and middle classes still resisted these claims, they no longer dreaded them as the precursors of a revolutionary deluge. If, therefore, the extension of the franchise was less eagerly demanded, it was also less vehemently resisted.

Closely connected with these changes in public feeling were the changes which were taking place in the legislature. The House of Lords, having now tacitly accepted that place in the constitution which the victory of the people had assigned to it, no longer arrogated to itself a legislative authority co-ordinate with that possessed by the representatives of the nation; and the Commons, on the understanding that they should enjoy an unquestioned superiority of real power, were quite willing that the Peers should retain a superiority of dignity and precedence. In both Houses the subjects under discussion were, with few exceptions, such as were not calculated to agitate men's minds in the way that the great changes we have related had done. There was in the legislature, as in the country, a subsidence of political excitement, and in consequence the debates in both Houses were, as a rule, less vehement, less

sensational, less rhetorical, more decorous and business-like, but redundant to an extent that seriously delayed the progress of public affairs.

This abatement of party spirit was not without its effect on the composition of the government; the cabinets having generally a more representative character than had hitherto belonged to them, and containing men whose views avowedly differed very widely, but who were content to merge their differences in order to promote the objects and measures on which they agreed. Of course to some extent this had all along been the case; but it was so in a much more marked degree throughout the period whose history we have now to narrate.

It was generally supposed that, notwithstanding the strategical error which the emperor had committed in ordering the occupation of the Danubian provinces, his army, led by able generals, well supplied with food, clothing, and warlike material, admirably drilled, and, to all appearance, highly effective, would speedily dissipate any force that the Turkish government might send against it; but, to the great mortification of the Russian emperor, and to the gratification and astonishment of the rest of Europe, the Russians, defeated by the Turkish forces at Kalafat, Oltenitza, Citale, Guergevo, were repulsed again and again from, and eventually obliged to abandon the siege of, the earthwork of Silistria, garrisoned by a body of Turkish troops, commanded by two or three English lads, and were at length ignominiously expelled from the provinces they had so aggressively entered.

Though the occupation of the Principalities had been followed by war between Russia and Turkey, the Great Powers did not cease from their efforts to bring about an amicable settlement of the question at issue between the belligerents. On the 29th of January the French emperor wrote to the Czar an autograph letter, proposing terms which would have carried with them no humiliation; but the Czar, who at this moment was rather provoked than humbled by the unexpected vigour with which the Turks were encountering his invasion of the Danubian provinces, replied in a somewhat haughty tone, and made an allusion to the retreat of the French from Moscow, which looked like a menace. His reference to that disaster was unfortunate. The French did not need to be reminded of that terrible disaster, and the invasion that followed it; they too well remembered the events to which he referred, were burning to avenge them, and were more likely to be exasperated than deterred by this reference to them. About the same time another very earnest attempt

was made to quench the warlike conflagration that had commenced. A deputation from the Society of Friends travelled to St. Petersburg to implore the Russian emperor to prevent the farther effusion of blood. They were kindly and courteously received. The Czar listened attentively to their address, and professed his desire for peace, but added that he could not permit the Turks to violate the stipulations of treaties made for the protection of his co-religionists. But he had already decided on the course he would pursue, and neither Imperial nor Quaker remonstrances could turn him from it.

And now at length it became necessary that serious preparations should be made for hostilities. Nearly forty years had elapsed since this country had been engaged in a great war. When troops began to be sent out, it was found that the transport-service was in a most ineffective condition—indeed, it would be nearer the truth to say that no transport-service existed—and yet the means must be provided for sending out an army, with all its arms, ammunition, baggage, and other necessary supplies, a distance of some 3000 miles by sea. All the troops that could be spared at the outbreak of this war amounted to about 25,000, and some time must elapse before even that number could be despatched to the seat of war. It was determined that vessels for the transport of this force should be at once hired or purchased, and that they should carry ten thousand men to Malta, to be landed there, and forwarded as soon as possible to Constantinople. The vessels which transported them were to return at once to England, and carry out another detachment of fifteen thousand men direct to Constantinople. By this means it was hoped that the whole force would arrive about the same time at the places where its presence might be required. Other troops were sent after them as soon as possible.

The general appointed to command the English contingent was Lord Raglan. As Lord Fitzroy Somerset he had accompanied the Duke of Wellington in the Peninsular War, during which he had acted as his military secretary. He was not, indeed, a brilliant, but a thoroughly safe man; one who might be fully trusted not to risk the destruction of the force committed to his care by any wild or desperate enterprise. Always accustomed to ask himself when in difficulties what "the Duke" would do under similar circumstances, he was a little old-fashioned in his military notions, and not well acquainted with or disposed to adopt the improvements introduced into the military art since the Duke's days. The French colleague, with whom he was somewhat unequally yoked, was cast in a very different mould. In Alaiers he was bravely, skilfully, but some-

what remorselessly, sustaining the glory of the French arms, when he was sent for to aid in carrying out that plot which had for its object the restoration of the empire in France. Of that plot he had been the soul, and was rewarded by being put at the head of the army which was to co-operate with our troops in the operations to be undertaken against Russia. Marshal St. Arnaud was well adapted to fill the post to which he was thus appointed. Brave, skilful, experienced, and coolly daring, he was as little likely to compromise his troops as Lord Raglan, but more likely to make those bold and successful strokes by which the fate of a campaign is often decided. The army under his command was far more numerous than that under the orders of the British general; but to balance this difference in the land forces it had been agreed that the English fleet should be much larger than the French fleet, and as Marseilles and Toulon were much nearer to the seat of war than the places from which the English troops were embarked, the expenses incurred by the two allied governments were on the whole not very unequal. The immense naval superiority of the allies enabled them to command the Black Sea, the Sea of Azof, the Baltic, and the White Sea—in a word, all the waters by which the Russian coasts were washed, thus cutting off all sea communication between Russia and the rest of the world, and enabling the allies to make a descent on any part of that coast which they might deem to be vulnerable, to re-embark after having effected what they could there, and then go away to make another unexpected descent on some distant and ill-defended place. By this means the whole coast was kept in a state of constant alarm; the Russian government was obliged to dismantle many of its fortifications, lest they should shelter their enemies, and to keep large forces on foot to be ready to meet any attempt that might be made by the allied fleets or the troops they conveyed with them. The limits of this History will not allow us to follow out the events of this desultory warfare; we must fix our attention on that which was the main object of the contest between the two contending parties—the defence or the destruction of Sebastopol, whether the Russian Black Sea fleet had retired. In point of fact, all the other attacks that were made after this attempt was determined on were little more than diversions intended to prevent forces or supplies from being sent to that part on which the attention of both parties was chiefly concentrated.

On the 8th of February the Russian ambassador, Baron Brunow, quitted London. On the 21st the Czar issued a manifesto, in which he denounced England and France as having ranged themselves

with the enemies of Christianity against Russia, which was fighting for the orthodox faith. On the 27th the ultimatum of the British government was conveyed to him in a letter from Lord Clarendon, the British Minister of Foreign Affairs, to Prince Nesselrode, the Russian minister, and containing the following passage:—

“The British government, having exhausted all the efforts of negotiation, is compelled to declare to the cabinet of St Petersburg that, if Russia should refuse to restrict within purely diplomatic limits the discussion in which she has for some time past been engaged with the Sublime Porte, and does not by return of the messenger who is the bearer of my present letter announce her intention of causing the Russian troops under the orders of Prince Gortschakoff to commence their march with a view to re-cross the Pruth, so that the provinces of Moldavia and Wallachia shall be completely evacuated on the 30th of April next, the British government must consider the refusal or the silence of the cabinet of St. Petersburg as equivalent to a declaration of war, and will take its measures accordingly.”

The only reply vouchsafed by the Russian government to this communication was a verbal announcement to the English consul, that the emperor did not consider it becoming in him to give any reply to Lord Clarendon's letter; and shortly after, war was formally declared.

We pass over the various stoppages made by our troops at Valetta, Gallipoli, Constantinople, Sentari, and Varna; and we shall not attempt to give any account of the hardships, annoyances, and difficulties, avoidable and unavoidable, to which they were exposed during their stay at these different places. We proceed at once to relate the steps taken with a view to obtain possession of Sebastopol. The design of this attack originated with the Duke of Newcastle, the Secretary of War, who persuaded his colleagues that it might be easily captured, and that to take it would be the likeliest means of bringing the war to a close. On the 29th of June he wrote to Lord Raglan, requesting him, on the part of her Majesty's government, to concert measures with his colleague for the siege of Sebastopol, unless, with the information in Lord Raglan's possession, but unknown in this country, he should be decidedly of opinion that it could not be undertaken with a reasonable prospect of success. Neither the English general nor his French colleague possessed any trustworthy information on this subject, and nearly all the knowledge they were able to obtain before their actual arrival in the Crimea was communicated to them by their respec-

tive governments. They, however, decided on carrying out the instructions received by Lord Raglan, which were exactly in accordance with those which St. Arnaud had received from his government. Both the minister who gave the order, and the generals who carried it out, hoped by a sudden assault, by land and sea, on Sebastopol, before the Russians had time to strengthen its exterior fortifications, to gain possession of the town, the harbour, and the Black Sea fleet. Accordingly, measures were promptly taken to transport the allied forces from Varna, where they were now assembled, to a point in the Crimea whence they could most conveniently march on Sebastopol. After many deliberations and much reconnoitring, it was determined that the landing should be effected at a part of the coast near the town of Eupatoria. Here, accordingly, 27,000 English, 22,000 French, and 5,000 Turks were landed. The remainder of the French force, left behind for the present, for want of a sufficient number of transports to convey it over, was to follow as soon as possible. The allies then marched southwards along the coast, meeting with no resistance till they approached the banks of the river Alma, on the other side of which a Russian army, commanded by Prince Menschikoff, was strongly posted and entrenched. After a long and deadly attack, bravely sustained, the allies forced their way into the Russian entrenchments, compelling the Russian army to retreat, after having suffered heavy losses. The allied troops were too much fatigued, and too weak in cavalry, to be able at once to follow up the advantage they had gained. After resting on the field of battle, they marched on, still keeping near the sea, without meeting with any serious resistance; and there is every reason to believe that if, after the battle of the Alma, the fleet had proceeded to force its way into the harbour of Sebastopol, and our troops had assaulted the north-west side of the town, which was very slightly fortified, as an attack from the land side was an event which the Russian government had not foreseen, Sebastopol would have fallen at once into the hands of the allies.

A young and daring general would undoubtedly have done this. Lord Raglan, though he had reached an age at which the spirit of caution and calculation generally predominates over the spirit of audacious enterprise, was willing to make the attempt. But his colleague, St. Arnaud, who fully possessed the *élan* and daring necessary for such an enterprise, was at the moment suffering from a severe and agonizing illness, which carried him off only a few days after. He refused his concurrence, and his refusal was the

cause of the long and wholly unforeseen protraction of the siege. The allied army continued its march southward past Sebastopol to Balaclava, pitching their camp near the coast, from which they must now draw their supplies of provisions, ammunition, and other things necessary for carrying on the siege of the town. Before his death, Marshal St. Arnaud, acting on sealed orders he had brought with him, transferred the command of the French army to General Canrobert.

The course adopted by the allies had been rendered necessary by the measures that had been taken by Prince Menschikoff, the Russian general. Profiting by the respite that the allies had given him, he determined to make one of those desperate but prudent and calculated sacrifices of which the history of Russia affords many instances. He caused seven of his largest ships to be sunk across the entrance of the harbour of Sebastopol. He thus made it impossible to carry the place by a naval and military attack, and compelled the allies to prepare for a regular siege. They nevertheless clung to the hope that a severe bombardment, followed by a vigorous assault, would give them possession of the town; and in this hope they laboured hard to bring up their artillery and ammunition. But while they prepared for the attack, the Russian general was no less diligent in providing for the defence; and the system of earthworks, now first brought into extensive use, enabled him speedily to render the defences of the place far more formidable than they were when the allies first marched on it. The prize was indeed worthy of the efforts which the two contending armies were making for the possession of it. Besides the town and a great number of government works and buildings which were contained within its fortifications, there was an immense system of docks, constructed with great skill and at an enormous expense, of solid masonry, and supplied with fresh water by an aqueduct twelve miles long, formed of gigantic blocks of stone. The fleet in Sebastopol at the time of the commencement of hostilities, comprised eighteen line-of-battle ships, seven frigates, thirty-two steamers, thirty-six smaller war-vessels, twenty-eight gunboats, and thirty transports.

An inlet of the sea at Balaclava served as a harbour for the English, and the Bay of Kamiesch for the French. But a long time was necessarily consumed in bringing up stores of various kinds required by the besieging army, and especially in getting the great siege guns into position under a heavy and continued fire. At length, on the 17th of October, the allies made a

tremendous and simultaneous attack by sea and land. Their fleets, however, were unable to force an entrance into the harbour; and so strong were the fortifications by which it was defended, that, notwithstanding the discharge of an immense number of guns which were brought to bear upon them, the allied fleet made but little impression on them, and the damage they succeeded in inflicting was speedily repaired. The land-attack was equally unsuccessful. The batteries of the allies poured forth on the town such a hail of bombs, cannon-balls, and rockets as had never before been rained on a besieged town; but the batteries of the Russians replied with nearly equal vigour, and at an early period in the contest a powder-magazine exploding in the very midst of the French works, paralysed their attack throughout the rest of the day, and enabled the Russians to keep up an uninterrupted fire on the British siege-works. After the discharge of an enormous number of projectiles, and a considerable destruction of life on both sides, it was found that little progress had been made by the allies, and that the damage done was such as could soon be repaired. It was evident that, if the town was to be taken at all, it must be taken by the slow process of a regular siege, carried on under very difficult circumstances and against a very powerful garrison, continually supplied with all things that were needed. For the allies, being unable with the force at their disposal to occupy the roads leading from Russia to Sebastopol, could not invest the town. Their cannon had suffered so much from the effect of the discharges made during the bombardment, which was kept up for a few days longer, that many of the guns were nearly unserviceable. On the other hand, the Russians had a garrison in Sebastopol sufficient for the defence of that town, and a far larger army outside, ready to attack any of the very extended positions which the allies occupied. However, the latter had, on the whole, the advantage, because supplies and reinforcements could be brought up to them more easily by sea than by the roads over which the reinforcements of the Russian army had to be marched and their supplies conveyed, at the cost of an immense number of lives and with ever-increasing difficulty.

The Russian general soon showed that he was determined not to allow the allies to carry on their operations against the town undisturbed. Large parties of Russian soldiers had for some time been reconnoitring in the direction of Balaklava. At length, on the 25th of October, an army of 30,000 Russians advanced against the English position, hoping to get possession of the harbours and to

cut the allies off from their supplies, or at any rate to destroy the stores which had already been landed. The part of the works on which the Russian troops first came was occupied by redoubts, defended by a body of Turkish recruits recently arrived from Tunis, who, after offering a very feeble resistance, fled in confusion. But when the Russians, flushed with this first success, attempted to pursue the advantage they had gained, they soon encountered a very different foe in the Highlanders, commanded by Sir Colin Campbell, who bore the brunt of the Russian attack with great firmness. The British cavalry particularly distinguished themselves in this action, routing a far superior force of Russian cavalry. It was in the course of this engagement that the unfortunate blunder occurred, in consequence of which 607 men galloped forth against an army, and only 198 came back, the rest having been killed, wounded, or made prisoners. A long, unsatisfactory controversy was carried on some time after, having for its object to decide who was to blame for throwing away, in so foolish a manner, the lives of these gallant men. It seems that the orders were not very clearly expressed, and that the general—Lord Lucan—by whom they were received, misapprehended them more completely than a man in his position ought to have done. In the end, the Russians were forced to retire, without having effected their object; but as they retained a portion of the ground occupied by the allies at the commencement of the battle, they too claimed the victory, and *Te Deums* were sung all over Russia in honour of this fragmentary success. On the day following, the Russians within the town made a sortie with a force of about 6000 men; but near the village of Inkermann they encountered so strong a resistance, from a far inferior force, that they were obliged to retreat. The Russian army at Balaklava had been prepared to co-operate with them; but the promptitude and vigour with which the allies repelled the sortie prevented the Russians from entrencing themselves at Inkermann, and thus frustrated the plan which had probably been formed for a combined attack on the allied position. The village of Inkermann, which was the scene of this skirmish, shortly after witnessed a more deadly contest. On the morning of Sunday, November 5th, the approach of the Russian army was heard, while it was still concealed from view by the mists which overhung the British position. That army had been greatly increased by the arrival of large reinforcements, and every effort had been made to exalt the courage of the soldiers: they had been stimulated by religious services and

exhortations, as well as by an abundant supply of ardent spirits; and they came on in the full confidence that they would be able to sweep the comparatively small British force from the position it occupied. That position was the centre of a grand attack made by the whole Russian army. The obscurity prevented the generals of the allies from discovering what was going on, or from clearly discerning, among a series of attacks on different parts of their position, which were real and which were mere feints. There was a good deal of confusion in both armies; but the obscurity, on the whole, favoured the Russians, who had received their instructions before they set out, and were moving together in large masses. It was, in fact, a battle fought pell-mell, man against man, and regiment against regiment, with very little guidance or direction from the commanding officers, and consequently one in which the superior skill of the British gave them little advantage. The principal point of attack throughout was the plateau of Inkermann, occupied by the Guards and a few British regiments, who maintained a long and unequal struggle against the main body of the Russian army. Bosquet, the ablest of the French generals, with a soldier's instinct, at once divined, amid all the obscurity, turmoil, and confusion, that the British position was the real point of attack; and therefore, leaving a portion of his force to defend his own position, he marched off to Inkermann, and never halted till his troops charged the Russians with such fury that they drove them down the hill, and decided the battle in favour of the allies. The Guards on this occasion displayed courage and firmness which have perhaps never been surpassed, and probably their valour and determination saved the British army. When Lord Raglan, in his report, after highly praising their gallantry, and doing justice to the services they had rendered, added that at length they had been forced to retire, they indignantly contradicted the statement, declaring that they had never retired at all, but had maintained the position assigned to them against all the efforts of the enemy till the French came to their assistance.

Meanwhile Mr Sidney Herbert, the minister at war, had succeeded in inducing Miss Florence Nightingale, well-known in London for her skilful and self-denying benevolence, to go out and take charge of the military hospitals in which the wounded soldiers were received. Everything connected with the hospitals there was in a state of chaotic confusion. The medical and other stores which had been sent out were rotting in the holds of vessels, or in places where they were not wanted. Provisions had been des-

patched in abundance, and yet nothing could be found to support men who were simply dying from exhaustion. The system of check and counter-check, which had been devised to prevent waste and extravagance in the time of peace, was the very cause of the most prodigious waste, extravagance, and inefficiency. The sort of dictatorial authority which had been conferred on Miss Nightingale, supported by her own admirable organizing and administrative ability, enabled her to substitute order for confusion, and procure for the multitudes of wounded men who came under her care the comforts and the medical attendance they needed. She arrived at Scutari with her nurses on the very day of the battle of Inkermann. Winter was commencing in the Crimea with unusual rigour and severity. In less than a week after her arrival a storm of terrific violence swept over the Black Sea, producing indescribable confusion among the ships of war and the transports. The *Agamemnon* and *Sanspareil*, two of the finest ships in the British navy, were stranded, but were afterwards got off, great numbers of transports perished; some were dashed against one another; others were scarcely able, with all the anchors they could throw out, and all the force of steam they could exert, to keep themselves from being driven on the shore. An immense quantity of clothing and other stores, which had been sent for the army, was cast away. Among the ships belonging to the transport-service that were lost in this storm was the *Prince*, a magnificent vessel of 2700 tons burthen, which had been especially purchased for this service by the government. She had on board a body of troops, and the greater part of the winter-clothing of the men, as well as medicines, and all things likely to be required for the sick and wounded. She had landed her troops, and was then ordered out of the harbour, which was already overcrowded with transports, and in which the wildest confusion and disorder reigned, through the divided authority and ill-defined responsibility of those who had the management of it. When the storm came on, her anchors would not hold; she was dashed against the rocks, and nearly all her crew, together with the valuable stores she contained, were lost.

The hurricane which had caused these disasters on the sea produced consequences scarcely less terrible on the land. It came rushing over the plateau on which the greater part of the English army was stationed, carrying away the tents, breaking the tent-poles, tearing the canvas to tatters, bearing off the baggage of officers and men, drenching the contents with rain, forcing the very mud from the rocks and dashing it in the faces of the soldiers who

were attempting to save something from the general wreck. A large portion of the stores of the commissariat was blown away, and those who had the care of them were so occupied with endeavours to preserve what was left as to be unable to serve out the rations to the men: the cooking fires were extinguished; the very coverlets that afforded a last shelter to the wounded and sick were carried away; and many of these poor creatures, exposed to the cold blast and rain, found an end to their sufferings in death. Some of those, too, who had previously been in good health succumbed under the privations and cold to which they were now exposed. Never, perhaps, did any army pass a more wretched night than that spent by our brave troops on the heights above Inkermann during and after this storm. Without shelter, food, or fire—wet, cold, and comfortless—they were obliged to lie down to rest, and if possible to sleep, on the mud, to which rain and the trampling of many men and animals had reduced the surface of their position. All these incidents by sea and land—the blundering arrangements by which such terrible and almost irreparable losses were caused, faithfully narrated by the correspondents of the daily press at home—called forth a strong feeling of sympathy and compassion, and caused efforts to be made, both by the government and by individuals, to succour those who were exposed to such terrible dangers and cruel hardships. With this feeling was associated a disposition to blame the ministry and those who had the superintendence of the operations, not only for those neglects for which they were properly responsible, but for the system which they had found in operation, and for disasters which no human care or foresight could have prevented.

The English government, as we have seen, had originally cherished the hope that Sebastopol might be taken by a *coup de main*, or, at all events, after a very short siege; and this illusion was shared by the English people generally, who day by day were anxiously looking for tidings of the capture of Sebastopol, and leading a ready ear to the reports of its fall erroneously or dishonestly raised. But it had now become evident that, if Sebastopol were to be taken at all, it would not be during this year, and that consequently the allied governments must choose between withdrawing their forces from the Crimea altogether, or keeping their fleets and armies as near as they could to the besieged town. They determined on adopting the latter course, which, indeed, was forced on them by public opinion. It only remained, therefore, that they should do their best to render the condition of our troops as com-

fortable as circumstances would allow, and to protect them from a recurrence of the hardships and sufferings to which they had been exposed. To clothe, to shelter, to feed, the troops that remained—to take care that the sick and wounded received due care and skilful medical attendance—were the chief cares and duties of the government at this moment, and more particularly of those members of it on whom the charge and responsibility of the war especially rested—the Duke of Newcastle and Mr Sidney Herbert.

It is now time to turn from the contemplation of so much courage and so much suffering to the events that had been occurring in England, while the ranks of our brave troops were being rapidly thinned, by the sword and by disease, in the Crimean peninsula.

The parliamentary session of the year 1854 was opened on the 31st of January. There were circumstances which gave to this customary solemnity more than usual interest and importance. In the first place, there was the expectation that some important announcement would be made in the queen's speech with regard to the great war which was then impending and the thought of which was at that moment uppermost in the minds of all men. Then there was a report industriously circulated, that Prince Albert had interfered unduly in the negotiations, and carried on a secret and improper correspondence with the Emperor of Russia. It was expected that this report would cause some demonstrations to be made against the prince; it was also anticipated that the Turkish and Russian ambassadors would appear in the procession, and that a tremendous popular demonstration of favour to the former and hostility to the latter would be made. These anticipations were only partially fulfilled. The speech from the throne did, of course, touch on the impending war, a few husses were raised against Prince Albert at certain points in the line of procession, but were drowned in a roar of loyal acclamations; the Turkish ambassador was in the procession, and was uproariously cheered; but the Russian ambassador wisely kept away. The royal speech intimated that an augmentation of the naval and military forces would be required to support the representations of the English government; that a bill for opening the coasting-trade of Great Britain to friendly nations would be introduced, as well as measures for "the amendment of the laws relating to the representation of the commons in parliament." This announcement naturally drew forth from those opposed to the changes thus foreshadowed strong expressions of opinion as to the inopportuneness of the introduction

of such a bone of contention at a time when the nation seemed to be on the brink of a great war. These objections were met by Lord J. Russell, who had, not without difficulty, obtained the consent of the cabinet to its being brought forward, but soon found himself under the necessity of withdrawing his carefully elaborated measure. In making the announcement he was so deeply moved that it was not without difficulty he could finish his speech; but he was in some degree repaid for the sacrifice he thus made by the testimonies of respect for his character and consistency which were freely given by his opponents as well as by his friends, and by none more cordially than by Mr. Disraeli, who, while strongly condemning the measure, professed the highest respect for its author, whose character and career he declared to be the "precious possession of the House of Commons."

Mr. Gladstone brought forward his budget under circumstances strongly contrasting with those which attended his last financial statement. War had then been alluded to as a bare possibility; now it had to be dealt with as an almost inevitable certainty. However, considering the circumstances in which he was placed, the position of the finance minister was very satisfactory. He had estimated the revenue of the country for the year 1853-1, after all the reductions that had been effected, at 52,990,000*l.*, it actually reached 54,025,000*l.* On the other hand, the expenditure had fallen short of his expectations by above a million, so that he had at his disposal upwards of two millions more than he had hoped for. Nothing could be more gratifying than the financial condition of the country at this moment, and it would have enabled Mr. Gladstone to make great progress in fiscal reform if the Crimean war had not arrested him. It was a source of deep mortification to Lord John Russell to be obliged to relinquish a measure of parliamentary reform on which he had bestowed much pains, it must have been no less mortifying to Mr. Gladstone to be compelled to abandon his plans of financial reform, and to increase that burden of taxation which he had so successfully laboured to alleviate. But instead of devolving on posterity the chief share of the cost of this war, as had been done in the case of so many of those that had preceded it—instead of adding to the debt of the country more millions than he had taken from it,—he determined, as far as practicable, to raise within the year the funds that would be required to meet both the ordinary and extraordinary expenses of the year. In order to effect this he proposed to the House of Commons to double the income tax during the continuance of the war. For

the present, however, he only asked the House to sanction the duplication of the tax for six months, reserving to himself the right of making a fresh appeal for a renewal of the increased tax if the war should be prolonged beyond that period. He also proposed to increase the duty on Irish spirits by 8*d.*, and on Scotch spirits by 1*s.* the gallon, to raise the malt-tax from 2*s.* 9*d.* to 4*s.* per bushel; and to postpone the reduction of the sugar duties. By these changes he expected to be able to raise 6,859,000*l.* in addition to the amount yielded by the increased income and property tax, to levy above 10,000,000*l.* more than in previous years, and to make the annual revenue of the country up to 66,746,000*l.*, which would exceed the anticipated expenditure of the year by more than 3,500,000*l.* These proposals were very favourably received both by the legislature and the country; and, notwithstanding some criticisms of the plan by Mr. Disraeli, it was adopted. Nothing more fully proves the progress of the nation's wealth and the buoyancy of its resources than the cheerfulness with which these burdens were borne.

The departure of the first division of the Baltic fleet, under the command of Sir Charles Napier, on the 11th of March, was an event which excited the interest and attention of the whole nation. We know the historic pride with which Englishmen have in all ages been accustomed to regard what they fondly called "the wooden walls of Old England," when as yet ironclads were not; and we can understand the feelings with which the departure of the stately fleet that had ever gone forth to war was regarded. Portsmouth was of course the centre towards which the thoughts of the whole nation were directed. During Friday and the whole of Saturday morning thousands on thousands of excursionists came pouring into the town from all parts of the country. The Queen, who had visited the fleet on Friday, came again to witness its departure on Saturday. At half-past one the signal for weighing anchor was given from the admiral's ship, and promptly obeyed. The *Royal George* led the way. In ten minutes from the time when the signal was given, her anchor was raised and her sails set. She was quickly followed by the *St. Jean d'Acre*, the *Tribune*, *Impératrice*, *Blenheim*, *Amphion*, *Princess Royal*, *Edinburgh*, *Ajax*, *Arrogant*, *Leopard*, *Valorous*, and *Dragon*. When all these were fairly started, the admiral's ship, the *Duke of Wellington*, the finest vessel in the English navy, got under weigh. The squadron comprised eight screw line-of-battle ships, four screw and four paddle ships of inferior size, making a total of sixteen war

steamers. Of these, the *Duke of Wellington* and the *Royal George* were three-deckers. As at that time the use of steam had recently been introduced into the navies of the world, it was noticed with some pride that every one of these vessels was propelled by steam power. The *Neptune*, the *Prince Regent*, and the *Boscawen* remained behind to form the nucleus of a second division, which was to follow under the command of Rear-Admiral Corry. Thus departed the first division of the great Baltic fleet, full of high hope, and carrying with it the good wishes and sanguine expectations of almost all who remained behind, and who had either viewed the magnificent spectacle with their own eyes, or had it vividly exhibited to them in the letters of special correspondents and the pictorial representations of the *Illustrated London News*. The admiral himself felt that the national expectations had been so highly raised that it was impossible they should be realized even by the utmost that he could hope to achieve, and therefore he did his best to moderate them. Before commencing operations in the Baltic, he signalled the following address to the fleet under his command: "Lads, war is declared. We are to meet a bold and numerous enemy: should they offer us battle, you know how to dispose of them. Should they remain in port, we must try to get at them. Success depends on the quickness and precision of your fire. Lads, sharpen your cutlasses, and the day is your own." Sir J. Graham, fearing that the admiral might be led by his own ardour, and by a desire to satisfy the highly raised expectations of the nation, into enterprises which might seriously endanger the safety of his fleet, wrote to him to counsel prudence, expressing an opinion that Sveaborg and Cronstadt were impregnable. Eventually Bomarsund was taken, but nothing at all commensurate with the highly raised hopes of the nation was effected, and the public disappointment was strongly expressed. Then ensued a recriminatory correspondence between the First Lord of the Admiralty and Sir Charles Napier, in which each tried to throw on the other the blame of the failure with which they were reproached. The fact was, that neither the one nor the other was really blameworthy. The nation had expected impossibilities, and was mortified because these expectations were disappointed; but both the First Lord of the Admiralty and Sir Charles had helped to raise these impossible hopes, which they were now censured for not having realized.

While the war was being carried on, the British people were watchful and interested spectators of its chief events, and especially of those transacted outside Sebastopol. In spite of the objections

urged by military men of the old school against the presence of reporters at the seat of war, they were sent by the principal journals in great numbers, and gave such detailed accounts of what was passing as would not have been permitted to have been sent in any previous war. Men of great abilities and high character were chosen for this purpose and discharged the duty assigned to them with fearlessness and impartiality. They gave the fullest details, and freely criticized the conduct both of the civil and military authorities. They did full justice to the skill and courage displayed in the field, but also described in the most graphic manner the horrid carnage of the battle-field and the sufferings of the sick and wounded. Nor did they hesitate to expose the mismanagement of those who had the care of the various departments of the army in the Crimea, as well as of those whose duty it was to forward supplies from home. These letters were perused in England with various and mingled feelings. Some gloated over the scenes of "glory" and carnage which were depicted by their writers; others regarded with abhorrence and disgust the horrid details of the butchery of so many brave men on both sides. Some, moved by compassion for those who had fallen in the conflict, were anxious to provide for their families; others were stimulated to alleviate the tortures of those who had been wounded, or who were suffering from some of the terrible diseases which the rigour of the Crimean winter, exposure, or the want of sufficient food and clothing, had produced. The Queen took the lead in giving effect to these feelings. She issued a commission, directed to Prince Albert and a large number of noblemen and gentlemen, authorizing them to raise a "Patriotic Fund" for the relief of the orphans and widows of the soldiers, sailors, or marines, who might fall in the war. The *Times*, which, by its correspondent at the seat of war (Dr. Russell), as well as by numerous articles it had published on the subject, had been mainly instrumental in drawing public attention to the condition of our sick and wounded soldiers in the Crimea, made an appeal on their behalf, which was responded to by a contribution amounting to 25,400*l.*, and a central association in aid of the wives and families of soldiers ordered on foreign service raised upwards of 100,000*l.* towards the objects for which it had been established. While the ministry and the great majority of the nation were endeavouring to alleviate miseries which were the foreseen and inevitable consequences of the war in which they had embarked, there was a small party which, having from the first protested against this war, now refused to contribute to

the relief of sufferings which, if their counsels had been followed, would have been altogether avoided. Of their views Mr. Bright was the chief exponent. Being at that time member for Manchester, he was requested to take part in a meeting, to be holden in that city on the 29th of October, for the purpose of raising money for the Patriotic Fund. In reply, he wrote a letter in which he thus stated his reasons for believing the war to be unnecessary, and for refusing to contribute to the removal of the evils, which had resulted from it. "My doctrine," he wrote, "would have been non-intervention in this case. The danger of the Russian power was a phantom; the necessity of permanently upholding the Mahometan rule in Europe an absurdity; our love for civilization, when we subject the Greeks and Christians to the Turks, is a sham; and our sacrifices for freedom, when working out the behests of the emperor of the French, and coaxing Austria to help us, are a pitiful imposture. The evils of non-intervention were remote and vague, and could neither be weighed nor described in any accurate terms." This bold and plain-spoken avowal afterwards cost Mr. Bright his seat. The opinions he expressed were such as he had all along professed. If he ceased to represent Manchester, it was not because he had changed, but because his constituents would no longer tolerate those peace principles which they knew that he held when they first elected him to be their representative. He and others who ventured to give expression to opinions so little in harmony with the spirit which almost universally prevailed, were loaded with all kinds of oburgatory epithets, were accused of being guilty of "immorality," of "meanness," of "hypocrisy;" were reviled as "pitiless Quakers," were told that "they might keep their dirty money," and reproached with refusing to consider "the hard case of the widow and the orphan."

The continuance of the war rendered it necessary, in the opinion of the government, to assemble the legislature at a very unusual period. Tuesday, December 12th, was appointed for its meeting, and it was opened by the Sovereign in person. The day was fine; an immense multitude lined the roads along which the procession passed on its way to the palace of the legislature, and greeted the Queen with unbounded enthusiasm. In fact, the loyal excitement on this occasion was so great that it was difficult to keep it within the bounds of safety and prudence; and, if precautions had not been taken beforehand, some serious accidents would probably have occurred. The royal speech was very brief. It announced that the two Houses had been called together at this unusual period that

they might take such measures as might enable the Queen to carry on the great war in which the country was engaged with the utmost vigour and effect. It referred to the hearty and efficient co-operation which had been afforded by the brave troops of the Emperor of the French, and to the alliances which had been concluded with the Emperor of Austria and the United States of America. In the debates on the address no opposition was offered, but many complaints were uttered. Lord Derby attacked ministers on account of the tardiness and want of prescience they had displayed throughout all the proceedings that had led to the war, as well as during the war itself. He charged them with being always too late; too late with their fleets, too late in sending troops to Constantinople, too late in entering the Black Sea, too late in declaring the crossing of the Pruth to be a *casus belli*, too late in sending an army to Varna, too late in their preparations for the war, and, to crown all, too late in arriving in Sebastopol. He concluded by urging the necessity of prosecuting the war energetically, and stated his conviction that in doing so ministers would be sustained by the public opinion of the country.

To the attacks of Lord Derby, the Duke of Newcastle, who, as minister of war, was chiefly responsible for the neglects and delays with which the government was reproached, replied, admitting that mistakes had been made, but arguing that the government had on the whole acted for the best and had done all that could be effected under the circumstances in which it was placed.

Meanwhile Sir C. Napier and his fleet had returned from the Baltic. The results he had obtained were summed up by one whose style seemed to prove him to be a distinguished relative of the officer whose deeds he glorified. "He has caused the thirty sail composing the powerful Russian fleet to shrink like rats into their holes; he has taken Bomarsund, caused Hango to be blown up, interrupted the Russian commerce; and for six months has kept in a state of inaction certainly 80,000, or 90,000 good troops—viz., 20,000 at Helsingfors, 15,000 at Abo, and 40,000 at Cronstadt, besides smaller corps protecting Revel and other places. He has restored and enlarged the knowledge of the Finland Gulf to navigation; has ascertained what large vessels can do there, and what they cannot do: when they can act alone, when with troops, and when gunboats can be used with effect. He carried out an ill-manned and undisciplined fleet, and brought back unharmed a well-organized, well-disciplined one, with crews exercised in gunnery and seamanship—in fine, a fleet now really what it was

falsely called when it started, that is to say, one of the most irresistible that ever floated on the ocean for all legitimate purposes of naval warfare." These praises, though written by a partial hand, were not undeserved; and the country generally, notwithstanding its disappointment, did justice to the veteran commander, acknowledging that he had faithfully and ably done his duty, and achieved all that could prudently be attempted.

The war produced a closer alliance between England and France. By the remembrance of common dangers and common sufferings, by the interchange of various international civilities and hospitalities, from the Sovereign on the throne down to the meanest citizens, it caused a transient discontinuance of those jealous and hostile feelings which previous wars, and especially that which terminated in 1815, had engendered or embittered. It is true that with the return of peace there was to a certain extent a revival of the pre-existing ill-feeling, but its rancour was greatly diminished, and the mitigation of it that followed paved the way for closer relations between the two countries, and disposed their inhabitants to regard each other not, as they had hitherto done, as natural enemies, but rather as natural allies. Much of this change was attributable to the Emperor of the French, who laboured successfully to perpetuate that good understanding which existed between the two nations.

Meanwhile parliament, after sitting for eleven days, and accomplishing in that brief period more business than had ever been despatched in a similar period, adjourned for a month. During that interval complaints of neglect and mal-administration waxed louder and louder, and, on the 23rd of December, the *Times*, in a leading article which produced a profound sensation throughout the country, complained bitterly that "the noblest army ever sent from our shores has been sacrificed to the grossest mismanagement," that "incompetency, lethargy, aristocratic hauteur, official indifference, favour, routine, perverseness, and stupidity reign, revel, and riot in the camp before Sebastopol, in the harbour of Balaclava, in the hospitals of Scutari, and how much nearer home we do not venture to say. We say it with extremest reluctance, no one sees or hears anything of the commander-in-chief. Officers who landed on the 14th of September, and have been incessantly engaged in all the operations of the siege, are not even acquainted with the face of their commander." These exposures of the state of things at the seat of war were accompanied by recommendations for the removal of abuses. "Send out," said the writer of the

article, "some man with competent administrative powers to the necessary basis of our operations, Constantinople; give him the command of the hospitals, that present so scandalous a contrast to the French hospitals; the command of the post-office and of the transports waiting for orders; and give him also the ordering of such supplies for the army as can be procured in the neighbourhood, and which the French have not obtained before us. Nobody has yet had the command of this important station who is fit for anything else than to be the figure-head of his own ship." These statements, founded as they were on facts which could no longer be concealed, produced a profound sensation. Already Lord J. Russell had privately addressed strong remonstrances to the Earl of Aberdeen on the subject of that mal-administration which the *Times* placed in so strong a light. In a long letter to the premier he urged the necessity of having the war minister in the House of Commons, and insisted that he should be a man who, from his experience of military details, his inherent vigour of mind, and his weight with the House of Commons, might be expected to guide the great operations of the war with authority and success; and he recommended that Lord Palmerston, who combined all these qualifications, should be intrusted with the seals of the war-department. It would have been well for all parties concerned if these suggestions had been adopted; but the prime minister refused to recommend the proposed change to the Queen, on the ground that it would be unfair to the Duke of Newcastle, against whom, as he said, no defect had been proved or incapacity alleged. But though Lord J. Russell failed, the vigorous denunciations of the *Times* produced an effect on the public mind which no minister could disregard; and before the year closed there was an irresistible demand that something should be done to put the administration of the war on a more satisfactory footing. Accordingly, when parliament reassembled on the 25th of January, 1855, Mr. Roebuck gave notice of his intention to move for a select committee "to inquire into the condition of our army before Sebastopol, and into the conduct of those departments of the government whose duty it has been to minister to the wants of that army." Lord J. Russell at once wrote to Lord Aberdeen, stating that he did not see how Mr. Roebuck's motion was to be resisted, but that, as it involved a censure on the war department, he considered that the only course open to him was to tender his resignation. The retirement of the leader of the House of Commons at this crisis paralyzed the

resistance which the government might otherwise have offered to Mr. Roebuck's motion, and, after a debate of two nights, the division showed the following numbers:—

For Mr. Roebuck's motion	...	...	...	305
Against	.	..	...	148
Majority against ministers				157

When the numbers were announced, the House seemed to be surprised and almost stunned by its own act. There was no cheering, but for a few moments a dead silence, then a burst of laughter. Ministers at once resigned.

The majority that voted in favour of Mr Roebuck's resolution must have foreseen that the chief result of its success would be to displace the ministry at a very critical moment. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that both parliament and the country had reason to be greatly dissatisfied with the state of destitution in which the army generally, and especially the sick and wounded, had been left. Whether it arose from mal-administration, faults in the system, or from accidental circumstances which no system and no minister could altogether control, the fact could not be denied that the administration of our army contrasted most unfavourably in every respect with that of our French ally. It was vain to plead that it could not have been anticipated that our army would have to pass the winter in the Crimea. The French authorities were equally taken by surprise, but they had been found fully equal to the emergency. It had long been said that our parliamentary system was on its trial; and it certainly seemed at this moment as as if it were going to break down. Could a general surrounded by newspaper-correspondents who pried into his proceedings, described his movements, gave the enemy, to a certain extent, an insight into his plans; a general who was criticised by correspondents of journals at the seat of war, and by writers in journals at home, have all his proceedings openly discussed in an assembly in which the strongest party feeling prevailed, and withheld by considerations of duty from offering any defence or explanation; could such a general, it was asked, cope on equal terms with an absolute monarch of almost boundless resources, responsible to no one, and able to wrap his movements and intentions in the most absolute concealment? It was no doubt true that the extraordinary bravery and resolution of our troops had enabled them repeatedly to repel the attacks of greatly superior numbers; but this result

seemed to be due to their courage rather than to the skill with which they had been led, and certainly was still less due to those by whom the administration of the war had been so egregiously mismanaged; and now the crisis had arrived, which was finally to determine whether liberty and publicity could prove itself a match in war as well as in peace for despotism and secrecy. It could not be denied that the wheels and springs of our military organization had become rusty, and worked slowly and laboriously; and it remained to be seen whether they could now be made to work efficiently under the system which the great Reform Bill had inaugurated.

The man whose reputation was most compromised by the mismanagement of which we have spoken was the Duke of Newcastle. He was most directly responsible for the maladministration that had been so much complained of, and even some of his colleagues were disposed to condemn him. He was accused of indolence, indifference, and incapacity. Against the two first of these charges he defended himself with spirit and success; but it may be true that a man might have been found who would have carried on the war with greater vigour, and have taken care to have the army better provided with all kinds of necessaries. Yet he certainly was not an incapable man. He had been looked to by that small but able band of statesmen who went by the name of Peelites as their future leader. But, though by no means deficient in administrative ability, he was a legislator rather than an administrator. His administrative defects were to a great extent supplied by the zeal and diligence of his colleague, Mr. Sidney Herbert, an admirable administrator, and one who laboured most diligently with him. On the whole, when we look dispassionately back on the events of that critical time, it would appear that the fault lay rather with the system and the circumstances than with the man. He resigned at the moment when the difficulties with which he had been obliged to contend were to a considerable extent overcome. Lord J. Russell and Lord Derby, each in turn endeavoured to form an administration, but both of them failed. The task was then undertaken by Lord Palmerston, and on the 6th of February Lord Granville announced to the House of Lords that a new ministry had been formed. It contained most of the members of the old administration.

The chief change that had been effected was the substitution of Viscount Palmerston for the Earl of Aberdeen at the head of the government, and the substitution of Lord Palmerston for the Du a

of Newcastle in the office of secretary at war. These two names indicated great vigour in the administration of the army, and in the general prosecution of the war. Lord Panmure, better known as Mr. Fox Maule, had already filled the office of minister of war during the six years of Lord J. Russell's administration, and had in that situation displayed a perfect mastery of the principles which should regulate an army, and of all the details of its administration.

But there was much in the management of the army that no ability, however great, could at once change. The evil was not only in the system, but also in the men that the system had produced. The system might be changed, though not without great difficulty; but the men could not be; it required a new generation to grow up under a new system before the inveterate evils which had been brought to light by this war could be wholly eradicated. And so the outcry that had been raised gradually merged into a general demand for army reform, culminating in a motion by Mr. Layard for competitive examinations, which was opposed and got rid of by the premier.

It would have been better for the reputation and the peace of mind of Lord Aberdeen if he had retired sooner, as he would have done if he had felt himself at liberty to follow his own inclinations. Dragged step by step into a war which he abhorred, he naturally did not throw into the prosecution of it all the vigour and energy with which, if once declared, it should be carried on. Lord Palmerston, on the other hand, had all along been the head of the war party in the country. By means of his own speeches, and still more through journals over which he possessed more or less control, he had strongly stimulated the war spirit. He therefore, beyond any other man, possessed the confidence of the war party, which was the overwhelming majority of the nation. He was therefore the man best adapted to carry the contest to a successful termination. If there ever was a subject on which he felt strongly, it was the one which was now being decided by that appeal to arms of which he was the chief instigator.

The first question with which the reconstituted ministry found itself compelled to deal was that which had caused the resignation of Lord Aberdeen. Three of its ablest and most distinguished members—Sir J. Graham, Mr. Gladstone, and Mr. Sidney Herbert—had offered a strenuous opposition to the appointment of Mr. Roebuck's committee, and their objections to it were still strong and decided. Lord Palmerston proposed the adoption of a middle course. He felt that a very large majority, both of the legislature

and the country, were bent on an investigation; but he hoped to save the honour of the ministry by substituting a committee selected by the government for that which Mr. Roebuck had proposed. Mr. Roebuck accepted the altered list; but the three gentlemen who had originally deprecated the inquiry were not satisfied with this arrangement, and gave in their resignation. Mr. Bright took advantage of the discussion which these changes produced to make an earnest appeal to the prime minister. "The angel of death," he exclaimed, "has been abroad through the land; you may almost hear the very beating of his wings."

Sir James Graham was succeeded by Sir C. Wood, Mr. Gladstone by Sir Cornewall Lewis, and Mr. Sidney Herbert by Lord J. Russell, then on his way to Vienna, for the purpose of assisting in negotiations which it was hoped might bring about the termination of the war. Thus almost before the new ministry was installed it underwent a most important change. Lord Aberdeen and the Duke of Newcastle had now been followed into retirement by the rest of the Peelites. The coalition ministry, or "the ministry of all the talents," as it was derisively but not incorrectly termed, was at an end, and a purely Whig ministry was once more at the head of affairs. Other changes equally important though less fundamental were made. Lord Pannure combined in his own person the hitherto separated functions of secretary *at war* and secretary *for war*. The control of the military discipline of the army was transferred to the commander-in-chief, and the new first lord of the Admiralty was charged with the duty of organizing a special board to superintend the transport-service. A commission, at the head of which were Colonel Tulloch and Sir J. McNeill, both of whom had taken a very active and conspicuous part in exciting the anti-Russian feeling in this country, was despatched to the Crimea to inquire on the spot into the administration of the commissariat department and of other supplies. Other commissions were at the same time sent out to examine into the sanitary condition of the hospitals, barracks, and the camp generally. A "chief of the staff," was also appointed to relieve Lord Raglan from a multitude of lesser duties which diverted his attention from the more important functions which belonged to him as commander-in-chief of the British army.

In the beginning of March two events were announced which it was hoped would tend to bring the Crimean war to an honourable and satisfactory termination. The first of these was the com-

commencement of the conferences at Vienna, to which, as has already been mentioned, Lord J. Russell had been sent. The other was the death of the Emperor of Russia. It was hoped that this latter event would have a very favourable effect on the negotiations, which had just commenced at the time when it occurred; for it was generally believed that the eldest son of the late emperor, by whom, of course, he was succeeded, was a man of liberal and enlightened views, pacific intentions, and anxious to commence his reign under peaceful auspices. It was asserted, too, and probably with truth, that his father before his death had advised that peace should be made with the Western Powers as speedily as possible. But the tone of the new Czar's first manifesto was not calculated to strengthen these pleasing anticipations. It announced that he intended to carry out the traditional policy of the family to which he belonged, and breathed throughout a warlike spirit. It was hoped, however, that these expressions were dictated by respect for the memory of his father, and by the necessity of employing firm and resolute language in view of the conferences which were being held at Vienna.

Another event which improved the prospect of peace was the adhesion of Sardinia to the offensive and defensive alliance between England and France. Its declaration of war against Russia was published two days after the death of Nicholas. The knowledge that it was about to take place violently enraged him, and probably accelerated his death.

Amid the hopes and fears, the triumphs and the sufferings of the war, the English people were beginning to feel its effects in the shape of scarcity of food. Complaints among the labouring classes waxed louder and louder, especially in the manufacturing districts. The opponents of the war naturally pointed to this as one of its necessary consequences, and as affording a strong argument for bringing it to a speedy conclusion. On the other hand, the advocates of the war denied that the scarcity was nearly as great as was alleged, and imputed it not so much to the war as to deficient harvests, particularly that of 1853. It was not easy to disprove their assertions, because, though the quantity of various kinds of goods, including corn, imported into England was very accurately ascertained, no serious attempt had ever been made to calculate the quantity of agricultural produce grown in our own island. One fact was indisputable, and that was, that the country against which we were engaged in waging war was the one from which our largest supplies would otherwise have been drawn.

Mr. Roebuck's committee, in spite of all the predictions that had been uttered to the contrary, continued its sittings, always attended by a large number of its members. Numerous witnesses were examined, among whom were the Duke of Cambridge, the Earl of Cardigan, Mr. Macdonald, the almoner of the *Times* newspaper, and Mr. Stafford. All told the same tale of incapacity, carelessness, and mal-administration, all confirmed to the fullest extent the statements which, published in the *Times* at the close of the preceding year, had produced so profound a sensation, and caused the dissolution of the Aberdeen ministry. The Duke of Cambridge stated in his evidence, that while a cabinet minister was assuring the House of Commons that the number of men fit for duty amounted to thirty thousand, the real number was only twelve thousand; that the army was short of medical attendance, short of food, short of clothing, ill supplied with everything that it needed. On the 16th of June the committee presented its report, which, after giving an account of the state of the army and of the departments by which it was controlled, concluded with these words:—

“Your committee report that the suffering of the army resulted mainly from the circumstances under which the expedition to the Crimea was undertaken and executed. The administration which ordered that expedition had no adequate information as to the amount of forces in the Crimea. They were not acquainted with the strength of the fortresses to be attacked or with the resources of the country to be invaded. They hoped and expected the expedition to be immediately successful, and, as they did not foresee the probability of a protracted struggle, they made no provision for a winter campaign. The patience and fortitude of the army demand the admiration and gratitude of the nation on whose behalf they have fought, bled, and suffered. Their heroic valour and equally heroic patience under sufferings and privations have given them claims on the country which will doubtless be gratefully acknowledged. Your committee will now close their report with a hope that every British army may in future display the valour which this noble army has displayed, and that none may hereafter be exposed to such sufferings as have been recorded in these pages.”

On the 22nd of the month in which the report was made, Mr. Roebuck gave notice of the following motion: “That this House, deeply lamenting the sufferings of our army during the late winter campaign in the Crimea, and coinciding with the resolution of their committee, that the conduct of the administration was the first and chief cause of those misfortunes, hereby visits with its severe repre-

hension every member of the cabinet whose counsels led to such disastrous results." This resolution was discussed on the 17th and 18th of July, and was got rid of by the usual expedient of moving and carrying the previous question. This extinguished an inquiry which, if it did not justify the forebodings which led Sir J. Graham and Mr. Gladstone to retire from the government, effected little more than to confirm the accuracy of the statements of the *Times* and the other principal journals which had sent correspondents to the seat of war.

The annual financial statement of the new chancellor of the exchequer, Sir Cornewall Lewis, showed the enormous cost of the struggle in which this country was now engaged. The income of the country reached what was then regarded as the enormous amount of 63,339,000*l.*, but the war had caused an excess of expenditure above that sum of 20,000,000*l.* Under these circumstances, it became impossible to adhere to Mr Gladstone's plan of raising within each year the amount required to meet the expenditure of that year, and it was proposed by the chancellor of the exchequer, and readily agreed to by the House, that the deficiency should be supplied by additional taxation and by a loan of 16,000,000*l.* Sir C. Lewis proposed to pay off this debt at the rate of a million per annum; a part of his plan which many financial authorities denounced as delusive and impracticable. His proposals were, nevertheless, adopted with unprecedented readiness. Never did any House of Commons show greater alacrity in imposing fresh burdens on the people. The legislature and the nation were ready to make any sacrifice of money in order to bring the war to a successful termination. The whole of the loan was at once taken up by the Rothschilds. Meanwhile Lord J. Russell had returned from the Vienna conference, the negotiations having failed for the present. It was announced, however, that they were not absolutely closed.

On the 24th of May Mr. Disraeli brought forward a motion condemning the ambiguous language used by the government in reference to the continuance of the war. In opposing this motion, Lord J. Russell adopted a tone so warlike, he so strongly condemned the proposals that had been made at Vienna, that all his hearers imagined that the negotiations there had been broken off with his entire approval; indeed, Mr. Roebuck afterwards declared that, having previously intended to vote against the government, he had been induced by this speech to support it. It therefore created no small astonishment when the Austrian plenipotentiary, Count Buol,

alleged that Lord J. Russell had approved these very proposals. The consequence was, that on Friday, June 6th, Mr. M. Gibson questioned Lord J. Russell on the subject, and succeeded in eliciting from him the admission that he had been of opinion that the terms proposed at the conference, and to which Russia was willing to accede, were such as would have afforded the basis of a satisfactory peace; that, not being authorized to agree to them, he had rejected them against his own judgment, and that he had subsequently come over to the opinion entertained respecting them by the rest of his colleagues, that they were inadmissible. This explanation, however, was received with great dissatisfaction both by the House and by the country. It was thought that the administrative failures which had produced so profound and so painful an impression, had to a great extent arisen from the war being conducted by men who secretly abhorred it, and therefore did not prosecute it with vigour. The revelations that had been made strengthened the suspicion that there were still men in the Cabinet who were more anxious to conclude a peace than to carry on the war with the thoroughness that the nation demanded. There was therefore a very strong determination in and out of parliament either to get rid of the ministry, or to drive Lord John Russell out of it. The Conservatives determined to take advantage of this feeling, and Sir E. B. Lytton gave notice of the following motion: "That the conduct of Lord J. Russell at the recent negotiations at Vienna has in the opinion of the House shaken the confidence of the country in those to whom its affairs are intrusted." Several subordinate members of the administration declared that they were determined to vote in favour of the motion, which in all probability would have been carried. Lord Palmerston, on the other hand, chivalrously assured Lord J. Russell of his readiness to stand or fall with him, but Lord J. Russell, with equal generosity, withdrew from the ministry before the motion was brought forward.

While the struggle was still intensely exciting the legislature and the country, Prince Albert rightly judged that the time had arrived when it had become expedient that, casting aside for the moment that reserve and reticence in speaking of public affairs which his position as Consort of the Queen imposed on him, he should remonstrate publicly with the legislature and the people on the danger to which the country was being exposed by the unreasonable conduct pursued towards the government. He therefore took the opportunity of the annual Trinity-House dinner, on the 9th

of June, to make a brief but statesmanlike appeal to the forbearance and patriotism of the nation. In proposing the health of her Majesty's ministers, he said : " Our constitutional government is undergoing a heavy trial, and we shall not get successfully through it unless the country will grant its confidence—its patriotic, intelligent, and self-denying confidence—to her Majesty's government."

This appeal was not made altogether in vain. After Lord John Russell's resignation the government was treated by parliament, the press, and the people, with more consideration. But this did not save the Prince from cruelly unjust imputations of sympathy towards Russia, at the very time when he was giving the people of this country wise counsels, and indicating the most effectual means of coping with that power.

We must now turn aside from the war, and from the feeling that it excited in this country, to other events of a less important character, but which nevertheless for the moment engaged the attention of the English people. In the course of the session, Lord R. Grosvenor had introduced a bill into the House of Commons having for its object the suppression of Sunday trading. It was one of those one-sided pieces of legislation which create a strong feeling of injustice in those who are the victims of it. Accordingly the plan called forth a kind of opposition which its proposer had not anticipated. On Sunday, the 24th of June, the persons who felt themselves aggrieved by the proposed measure displayed their feelings in a manner not a little alarming to those who were unfortunate enough to be exposed to the manifestation of them. On that day Hyde-park presented a singular spectacle. Multitudes of the lower classes beset the various drives, and received every equestrian or carriage that appeared in the park with terrific howls and outcries, which in many instances frightened the horses, and placed the lives of those who were conveyed by them in jeopardy. The crowd afterwards proceeded to Belgrave-square, Wilton-street, Grosvenor-square; doing much damage before a sufficient force of police could be collected. Nor was the mischief confined to these aristocratic localities; for in Hampstead-road and Tottenham-court-road much violence was also committed. The mob mustered again on the following Sunday in still greater force; but the police were better prepared for them.

Lord R. Grosvenor was not the man to ride the storm he had raised. He withdrew his bill, but did not prevent another riot in the park on the following Sunday. The conduct of the police in regard to these disturbances was much complained of, and was

the subject of reiterated discussion in the House of Commons, ending in the appointment of a commission of inquiry.

On the 29th of June a rumour of the death of Lord Raglan was current in London, but was officially contradicted in the Upper House by Lord Panmure, and in the Lower by Lord Palmerston, both of whom stated that the government had received no intimation of the decease, nor even of the serious illness, of the British commander. But the next accounts that were received conveyed the intelligence that a sudden and unfavourable change in his symptoms had taken place on the afternoon of the 28th, and that he had expired in the evening.

On the 14th of August parliament was prorogued by commission. The public attention was engrossed by the war, and the one thing the people demanded of their rulers was that it should be vigorously prosecuted. Lord Palmerston was not the man to quarrel with this state of public feeling; accordingly, little important legislation was attempted, and less accomplished. However, a session of such long duration could not be altogether unfruitful, and we may mention among the measures which it produced, a metropolitan improvement act, a limited liability act, the abolition of the stamp duty on newspapers, and a beer bill.

Four days after the prorogation, the Queen and Prince Albert drew still closer the cordial alliance between the two kingdoms and the intimacy between the two courts by a return visit to the Emperor and Empress of the French, during which the hospitalities shown to the French ruler were reciprocated by him, and which, to borrow the language of the official statement, was highly satisfactory "both on personal and political grounds."

We must now return to the military and naval operations that were being carried on in the two principal theatres of war, the Baltic and the Black Sea. And first with regard to the Baltic. This year the public expectations were less highly raised. A fleet, larger and better appointed than that of the preceding year, sailed under the command of Rear-Admiral Dundas. Of course, the interest and enthusiasm had somewhat abated, the attendance was not so large nor the acclamations so loud as they had been when the first fleet departed; nevertheless, the magnificent spectacle drew together a large concourse of spectators, and created a warm interest throughout the nation. The chief difference between this fleet and that commanded by Sir C. Napier was, that whereas one division of the latter was composed chiefly of sailing line-of-battle ships, the former was entirely composed of vessels propelled

by steam. The latter, too, was without floating batteries and mortar-vessels, with which the former was provided. The former was followed by a flotilla of gunboats, while Sir C. Napier's fleet was attended by only one. Some delay was caused by a collision which took place between the *Duke of Wellington*, the largest ship in the fleet, and an American emigrant ship, obliging the admiral to transfer his flag from her to another ship, and to send her back to Gosport for repairs. The allied fleets met in the Baltic on the 1st of June. Their chief exploit there was the bombardment of Sveaborg by means of those gun and mortar-boats for want of which Sir C. Napier had not deemed it prudent to make any attack on it. The bombardment was carried on for three days, with scarcely any injury to the men or the ships. Upwards of ten thousand tons of shot and shell were rained on the fortress, setting fire to a large number of buildings, and causing great destruction of life and property, but producing no appreciable effect on the result of the war. The sailors in the large ships had no opportunity afforded them of participating in the fight; all they could do was to crowd the masts and yards of their vessels, and encourage their more actively engaged comrades by their acclamations.

At the other theatre of war a more decisive success was achieved. The sufferings of the army at the commencement of the year 1855 were little less severe than they had been at the close of the year 1854. Although public opinion at home was loudly demanding that our brave soldiers should be supplied with everything necessary to maintain them in health, if not in comfort, it was only very slowly that the improvements demanded could be introduced; and, even when the supplies did reach Balaklava, it was with great difficulty that they could be sent forward to the men in the camp, and with still greater difficulty to those who were labouring in the trenches. The old track-road from Balaklava to the camp, never sufficient for the purpose, was so worn by the transit of artillery and heavy carriages, that it had become a sea of mud, through which vehicles could with difficulty be forced. It was determined therefore to lay down a railway; and about Christmas a large body of engineers and navvies, with all the material necessary for its construction and working, were sent out, and reached Balaklava towards the end of January. While the former were surveying the country, planning the proposed line, and making their preparations, the labourers they had brought with them were very usefully employed in clearing away the filth that cumbered the streets of Balaklava, which had been the fertile source of cholera and

other diseases, and if allowed to remain would no doubt have proved still more fatal. Having rendered this great service, they next set to work on the railway; and in the course of a very short time it was laid down and in full operation, conveying all the ammunition which was required for the operations in front of Sebastopol, and ministering to the wants of the troops. Henceforth the soldiers in the camp and the trenches were well clad, sheltered, and supplied, and were consequently much better able to perform their duties. Reinforcements, too, were rapidly pouring in; large siege guns were being brought up to the trenches; and when, on the 9th of April, the bombardment recommenced, the superiority of our fire over that of the Russians was very apparent. But while our men had been labouring in the trenches, the Russians had been as diligently occupied in throwing up fresh earthworks, and making Sebastopol a far more formidable fortress than ever; so that the allies had a very much greater and more difficult work now before them than they had when they first came before Sebastopol. One great advantage especially the Russians had been allowed to gain. A hill called the Mamelon, a position the possession of which was of the greatest possible importance to both parties, and which the allied troops might easily have occupied, was seized and fortified by the Russians in a way that greatly increased the difficulties with which their opponents had to contend, and served to prolong considerably the duration of the siege. General Canrobert, finding his health failing, and feeling himself unequal to the discharge of the duties of commander-in-chief, sent in his resignation, with a request that he might be allowed to serve under his successor as a general of division. In the reply his resignation was accepted; but instead of being made a simple general of division as he had requested, he was placed in command of the first corps of the army. By his own recommendation he was succeeded by General Pelissier, a man in every way fitted for the task that was confided to him. An older and more experienced soldier than Canrobert, having served in the French army for forty-one years out of a life of fifty-nine, like most of the eminent French generals of that time, the school in which he had chiefly learned the art of war was Algeria. He was a man of strong constitution, firm, resolute, and persistent; one who would work steadily on the same line till he had effected his object. About the same time reinforcements arrived, which brought the army under his command up to nearly 120,000, while the effective English force was raised to its old number of 30,000. A Sardinian contingent of 15,000 reached

the Crimea about the same time, raising the total amount of the allied forces, including Turks, to more than 200,000 effective men; an army more than sufficient to carry on the operations of the siege, and protect those engaged in the trenches. On the other side the Russians were endeavouring to entrench themselves more and more strongly. It was not so much a siege and defence of a town—for it must be remembered that the allies were never able to invest Sebastopol—as a contest between armies in communication with their respective countries, one by sea, the other by land. The victory was pretty sure ultimately to be with those who could bring up supplies and reinforcements with the greatest rapidity; and in this contest the allies had the advantage, while the difficulties of their opponents were continually increasing, as the roads by which the prodigious supplies of food and warlike material they required had to be brought over enormous distances, by a passage which was daily becoming more and more difficult.

At the commencement of June the generals of the allies determined to make another attack on the defences of Sebastopol. On the 9th of that month, and on the following days, bombs, cannonballs, rockets, and other fiery missiles were rained on the town with greater fury and persistence than on any previous occasion. The Russian batteries replied with nearly equal vigour. But the tremendous cannonade of the allies was chiefly intended to cover an attack which had previously been arranged by their generals, and which was to be directed against three of the most important of the Russian defences: the Sapone, or white redoubts, the Mamelon; and the quarries which lay between the British position and the Redan. The assaults on the two first-mentioned defences were undertaken by the French, that on the latter by the British; to the Turks was assigned the defence of Inkermann, and other positions from which the English and French troops were withdrawn. The three attacks were separated from each other by the Varabelnaia and Carceuing ravines, which, however, served as a shelter for the British and French reserves. The quarries against which the efforts of the English were directed had been converted into rifle-pits, and, as they formed a sort of outwork to the Redan, they had to be captured before it could be attacked. Our troops found them undefended, and speedily converted them from a shelter to the defending Russians into a shelter for the attacking British. Then a force amounting only to about a thousand men, supported by artillery, held them against five repeated efforts made to recover them by a very superior Russian force; and so completely were

the Russians overmastered by the fire poured on them from our batteries that some of our officers made their way into the Redan, and according to the reports they gave, that important fortress might have been captured, but the English general, not being aware of the condition to which it was reduced, would not, with the information he possessed, have been justified in giving an order which might greatly have accelerated the conclusion of the siege, and perhaps have led to the immediate capture of the town. Be this as it may, the British troops on this day accomplished the task that had been assigned them.

Our allies were no less successful. Bosquet, the ablest of the French generals, commanded the attack on the Mamelon; but it was an enterprise depending less on the skill of the general than on the agility and courage of the assailants. And the Zouaves, to whom the assault had been confided, possessed these qualifications in perfection. They scrambled like monkeys up the hill, carried battery after battery at the point of the bayonet, and ended by forcing their way into the redoubt that crowned it. But their precipitation nearly undid what their courage had accomplished. Carried away by an excess of ardour, in spite of the orders they had received to the contrary, they rushed towards the Malakoff, hoping to be able to carry it in the same manner as the Mamelon. But they were met with such a blast of artillery as compelled them first to stop, and then retreat. At this critical moment the Russian reserves poured down on them, drove them back in great confusion, and reconquered the Mamelon. Then the French reserves, under General Brunet, in their turn came on with a rush so impetuous that the Russians were again driven out of the redoubt, and obliged to leave the French masters of the position. A large body of engineers was instantly pushed forward into the captured fort, and laboured so diligently during the night that when the morning dawned the fortifications and guns of the Mamelon were turned against the fortress of which they had hitherto formed one of the most formidable defences.

Lastly, the Sapone, or white works, were seized by a sudden dash, and thus, in the course of a single day, the whole of the plan of the allied generals was accomplished; three positions of the utmost importance were transferred from the defenders of Sebastopol to its besiegers, and the defence was confined within narrower limits. These advantages were not gained without a very heavy loss of life on the part of the allies, whose killed and wounded amounted to about 5000.

Nothing on a large scale was attempted until the 17th, when the

bombardment was renewed, and on the following day the attack was commenced. It had been decided that the English, who, since their conquest of the quarries, had advanced their zigzags considerably beyond it, should now attack the Redan; while the French, taking their recent conquests of the Mamelon and the white forts as the basis of their operations, were to endeavour to capture the Malakoff. This plan, which appears to have been well-concerted, failed, partly through the brave and energetic resistance of the Russians, but chiefly through a want of ensemble in the French attack, arising from an unfortunate error on the part of the French general, Meyran, who mistook a shell for the rocket the firing of which was the appointed signal for the simultaneous advance of the different attacks, and gave the word to his division before the others were ready. The consequence of this mistake was, that the Malakoff, and all the batteries connected with it, poured an unrelenting fire on his troops, and soon threw them into a confusion which was increased by the fall of the general, and ended in a retreat; so that, when the signal-rocket was at length fired, the other division was exposed to the whole fire of the Russian batteries, and was in turn obliged to desist. These failures produced similar ill success on the other points; and the only attack that was at all successful was that which was made under the command of Major-general Eyre, who actually forced his way into a considerable suburb of the town, and held the position he had gained for seventeen hours. At the end of that time he was compelled, through want of support, to withdraw his troops.

This repulse was the first indisputable triumph the Russians had gained, and they made the most of it. Lord Raglan only survived this failure ten days. His death was attributed to cholera; but it is probable that disappointment, anxiety, and overwork, aggravated the disease to which he fell a victim. He was succeeded in his command, in right of seniority, by General Simpson; a man, like his predecessor, broken in health, but who was confirmed in the command by the home government. The great object of the allies now was to gain possession of the Malakoff and the Redan; especially the former, because it commanded the town, the fate of which would probably be decided by its capture. Many weeks were devoted to preparations for a second assault, and the bombardment was not renewed till the 17th of August. The Russians, on the other hand, attempted to parry the meditated attack by strengthening their defences, and making another vigorous attack from without on the works of the besiegers.

Accordingly, on the 16th of August, the day before that on which it was intended that the bombardment should recommence, the Russian army outside Sebastopol, in obedience, as was believed, to positive orders despatched from St Petersburg, descended into the valley of the Tchernaya, near the Traktir bridge, and commenced a violent attack on the allies, the brunt of which was borne by the French. The Russian commanders, according to their usual practice, had stimulated the courage of their men by a copious supply of brandy, the consequence of which was that they charged with the wildest impetuosity. After a fierce contest, they were driven back with terrible slaughter, rendered much greater by the circumstance that the bridge by which they attempted to retire, not being wide enough to allow the passage of the panic-stricken crowd, was rendered almost impassable. This battle appears to have formed part of a plan for a general assault on the allies from the town as well as outside, with a view to obtaining possession of the harbour and of Balaclava, and compelling the allies to raise the siege. The signal failure of the first operation frustrated the whole plan, and the battle did not at all interfere with the progress of the siege, which, as had been already arranged, recommenced with a severe bombardment on the day following.

On the 5th of September, 1855, just twelve months from the day on which the allied armies sailed from Varna, the bombardment was renewed with greater vigour than ever, and was continued during the sixth, seventh, and a portion of the eighth days of that month. The cannonade of the French alone extended over a space of four miles, that of the English was more concentrated. The firing continued day and night, with only such intervals as were necessary to allow time for the pieces to cool. It was, however, only preparatory to a great attempt that was to be made to take the Malakoff. Twenty-five thousand French and five thousand Sardinians were concealed in the trenches and elsewhere, impatiently waiting for the word of command to spring out and rush to the assault. The hour chosen for the commencement of the attack was about mid-day, the time at which the Russians were accustomed to repose, and at which consequently many of them retired from the ramparts. Accordingly at twelve o'clock the firing ceased, and the assaulting party, sped forth. They passed the ditches, scrambled up the hill, and in a quarter of an hour the tricolour was floating on the old Tower of the Malakoff. Amongst those who rushed up was a party of engineers, who instantly commenced placing the heights in a position of defence

against the Russians. They soon came on in dense masses, and on, too, came the French on the other side, despatched by General Bosquet to the support of their countrymen. A tremendous struggle ensued, which ended in leaving the French in possession of the redoubt.

The part taken by the English on this day was more creditable to the bravery of the soldiers than to the skill of their commander. General Simpson had committed to Generals Codrington and Markham the task of assaulting and if possible taking the Redan. The attack was delayed till the Malakoff was captured, in order that the efforts of the Russians might be distracted and paralyzed by a number of simultaneous assaults. Therefore the moment that the tricolour was seen floating on the Malakoff the signal for the assault on the Redan was given. At first a thousand men of various arms were sent out. They had to traverse a long distance under the hot fire of the enemy before they reached the place; and when they forced their way into it, the fire was equally severe, and multitudes were mown down by it. In vain was messenger after messenger despatched for reinforcements; not one of them succeeded in escaping the fiery hail through which he had to pass in order to reach General Codrington. At last Colonel Windham, who commanded the handful that still remained, determined himself to undertake the errand, but while he was conferring with General Codrington, his men were driven out by the vastly superior Russian force opposed to them. Pelissier, seeing that the struggle for the Malakoff was still going on, sent a message to General Simpson, begging him to effect a diversion of the Russian force by making a second attempt on the Redan, but the English trenches were so crowded that he could not organize a fresh attacking force. Thus the first attack failed because too few took part in it, and a second was impossible, because there were too many present when it should have been made. An assault against the south-western defences of the town, under the direction of General Canrobert, also failed. It was found that the Russians in this quarter were better entrenched and in greater force than had been anticipated, and as the attack had answered its main purpose, in diverting the attention of the Russians from the great struggle in the Malakoff, Pelissier gave orders to desist as soon as he saw that his hold on the redoubt was secured. On the side of the besiegers about 10,000 men were killed or wounded, and the loss of the Russians must have been much greater.

It had been intended that the attack on the Redan should be

renewed on the following morning; but Gortschakoff, during the night, had taken measures which rendered any farther attempt unnecessary. Some time before, he had caused a bridge of boats to be constructed across the harbour, and he now made use of it to transport his army to the other side. The allied generals had some suspicion of what was going on, but made no attempt to interfere with the retreat of the enemy; and when the morning dawned, not only the troops, but the regular inhabitants, and as many of the wounded as it was possible to remove, had been transferred to the north side. All the principal buildings were blown up or burnt, the ships that still remained were either sunk or fired. Then the Russians removed the bridge by which they had crossed, and thus placed a deep arm of the sea between themselves and their antagonists. These last, on entering the town, found it shattered to an extent that they could not have anticipated. Everywhere there were tokens of the destruction that they had wrought. The houses were almost all destroyed, the streets literally paved with fragments of shells and other missiles sunk in the earth, the hospital contained a thousand dead who the day before had been carried into it alive, besides a large number who had been left behind because they were too severely wounded to be carried across the harbour with the rest of the army. One of the first tasks which the conquerors had to perform was the destruction of the forts, docks, and aqueducts, which had been constructed with extraordinary care and skill, and on which the Emperor Nicholas had expended enormous sums. This was effected with great difficulty; for such was the solidity of those works, that even the force of gunpowder would scarcely suffice to upheave them.

The capture of the south side of Sebastopol practically terminated the war. It had gained for the allies their great object—the safety of the Turkish empire, no longer menaced, now that the Black Sea fleet and the fortress from which it issued had ceased to exist. On the other hand, the Russian government had nothing to gain, but everything to lose, by the continuance of a war which caused a terrible drain on its resources, and in which, owing to the distance and naval superiority of the allies, it could only receive their blows without returning them. The “sick man” too, now that the Black Sea fleet was no more, was strong enough, even without the aid of the allies, to defend his own territories from Russian aggression. For the present, however, the two armies remained confronting one another. Our soldiers were obliged to spend another winter in the neighbourhood of Sebastopol and

Balaclava; but it was spent in a manner very different from that which had preceded it. They were amply supplied with necessaries, they enjoyed some luxuries, were warmly clad, comfortably housed in wooden huts, and probably, on the whole, as well protected from the inclemency of the weather, on the dreary Crimean coast, as they would have been at home.

The space at our disposal will not allow us to do more than just mention the subsidiary operations carried on in the Black Sea and the Sea of Azoff, or the heroic defence of Kars by Colonel Williams and Dr. Sandwith.

We must now turn to the negotiations for peace, which, though momentarily interrupted by the return of Lord John Russell from Vienna, were still being carried on. The demands made on the part of the allies had been placed under four heads, which were known and talked of under the name of the "four points," till that phrase had become familiar as a household word throughout Europe. These points were:—

1. That Russia should abandon all control over Moldavia, Wallachia, and Servia.

2. That Russia should relinquish her claims to control the mouths of the Danube.

3. That all treaties calculated to give Russia a preponderance in the Black Sea should be abrogated.

4. That Russia should renounce the claim she made to an exclusive right to protect the Christians in the Ottoman dominions.

The third point was the one that presented the chief difficulty. The Russian plenipotentiaries were neither prepared to concede the diminution of the Russian fleet in the Black Sea, nor to suggest any other way in which the object for which the allies contended might be effected. The discussions were then suspended for a time, to allow a reference to the Czar. The conferences were resumed, but the Russian ministers declared that they were not empowered to suggest any plan. The allies proposed a plan to which Prince Gortschakoff refused to consent. Count Buol then offered another, which, as has already been related, Lord John Russell personally thought satisfactory, but which his instructions prevented him from accepting, he therefore withdrew from the conferences altogether, as did also M. Drouyn de Lhuys, the French plenipotentiary. The proposal of Count Buol was, that the third point should be secured by allowing Russia, Turkey, England, and France, each to have the same number of ships in the Black Sea; so that the three allied powers together might, whenever they

chose, have a fleet three times as numerous as Russia could have. The English government, however, did not consider that this proposal would afford Turkey a sufficient security against Russian ambition, and they pressed Austria to join with them in demanding better securities, and, if they should be refused, in carrying on the war against Russia. To the pressure thus brought to bear on her, Austria replied by making various other proposals, having for their object the limitation of the Russian fleet in the Black Sea, or the counteraction of the dangers with which it threatened Turkey. None of these proposals seemed sufficient to the allies, and it is by no means certain that any of them would have satisfied the Czar. Austria considered that, having made these propositions to the allies in vain, she had exonerated herself from the obligation to take up arms. However, the rejection of his proposals did not discourage Count Buol. He still persevered in his efforts to bring about an agreement between the belligerents. Four new points were brought forward by him, which in substance were nearly the same as the four old points, though somewhat differently worded. The first redressed the Moldavian frontier, so as to render it more defensible against Russian invasion. The second took from Russia all control over the mouths of the Danube. The third proposed that no fleet and no naval station of any country should be permitted in the Black Sea, but that Russia, Turkey, England, France, Sardinia, and Austria might each of them have the same number of small armed vessels in that sea, to act as a sort of maritime police and to protect the coast, on the other hand, merchant ships of all countries were to be allowed freely to enter it. Other questions were left to be settled by subsequent negotiations.

The Czar, without hesitation, accepted these proposals as a basis for negotiating a treaty of peace, and on the 16th of January the news of his acceptance of them arrived in Paris and London. In the former city, and indeed throughout the whole of France, the announcement was welcomed with warm and heartfelt satisfaction. The French were beginning to be weary of a war in which they had no very direct interest; which was enormously costly; and in which they had won an increase of prestige and military glory, which might be impaired, and hardly could be improved, by the continuance of the war. The reception which the news met with here was less warm. England had a more visible and direct interest than France in the settlement of the Eastern question. With her greater wealth, she was less oppressed by the burden of the war. She had, too, hitherto played but a secondary part. She had

been repulsed at Sveaborg, and she had failed in the attack on the Redan. The chief glory of the capture of Sebastopol belonged to France. But the mal-administration which was the chief cause of our want of success had now been remedied, and great preparations had been made, at a vast expense, for continuing the war. A fleet of forty-four mortar-boats and floating batteries, and one hundred and sixty gunboats propelled by steam, had been got ready to sail with the larger ships into the Baltic; and it was hoped that this force would enable us to take Sveaborg and Cronstadt, and to dictate terms of peace in the capital of the Russian empire. The consequence was, that the feeling of satisfaction produced by the announcement of the probable conclusion of the war was largely tempered by a feeling of disappointment that this costly and formidable armament should not be employed. At one time, indeed, it seemed not improbable that France would have retired from the contest, and have left England and Turkey to carry it on alone—an eventuality for which Lord Palmerston declared himself to be fully prepared. However, the acceptance of the basis of negotiation by the Russian emperor had virtually terminated the war. A congress was held at Paris, at which England was represented by Lords Clarendon and Cowley. An armistice was at once concluded, on the 30th of March the treaty was signed by the plenipotentiaries of the Great Powers, and on the 27th of April the ratifications were exchanged.

Thus ended one of the most formidable wars in which this country was ever engaged. It caused the loss of the lives of about twenty-two thousand British soldiers, of whom only some four thousand died by violence, the remainder being victims of disease, caused in most instances, by exposure to wet and cold, by the want of proper food, clothing, or shelter from the inclemency of the weather. It cost this country in money at least 50,000,000*l.*, besides the far heavier loss, the amount of which it is impossible to estimate, arising from the disturbance of our home trade and the interruption of our commerce with foreign nations.

Before the members of the conference, by which the pacification was brought about, separated, they agreed to the following very important improvements of international law relating to maritime operations in the time of war.—

1. Privateering is and remains abolished.
2. The neutral flag covers enemies' goods, with the exception of contraband of war.
3. Neutral goods, with the exception of contraband of war, are not liable to capture under an enemy's flag.

4. Blockades, in order to be binding, must be effective; that is to say, maintained by a force sufficient really to prevent access to the enemy's coast.

The concurrence of the government of the United States of America was sought for these resolutions. It was given to all but the first, the reason of the exception being the refusal of the European powers to agree that for the future all private property should be exempted from capture by ships of war.

When the intelligence of the conclusion of peace reached the Crimea the allies on the south side of the harbour of Sebastopol hailed the news with a noisy exultation which must have been distinctly heard and understood on the opposite side of the harbour. The Russians, who still held possession of the northern part of the town, received it in sullen silence.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE INDIAN MUTINY.

It was generally expected that the negotiations which had been opened at the commencement of 1856 would be followed by a speedy restoration of peace; and this expectation was strengthened by the manner in which they were referred to in the queen's speech at the opening of parliament on the 31st of January. That speech did not hold out any prospect that the legislative activity of the session would be greater than that of those which had preceded it for some years past. It recommended to the attention of parliament the improvement of the law of partnership, of the laws relating to shipping-dues, and the question of law reform; subjects little calculated to excite a strong feeling either in the legislature or the country. The House of Lords had undergone perhaps a greater change in its *personnel* than at the commencement of any previous session for many years past. Several peers had died since the last meeting of parliament, and an unusually large number took their seats for the first time at the commencement of the session. But a new peerage had been conferred during the parliamentary vacation which attracted much more interest than all those which had been obtained by inheritance. Sir James Parke, lately one of the judges of the Court of Exchequer, had been raised to the peerage by the title of Baron Wensleydale, but the patent that conferred the peerage on him contained the unusual recital that his barony was to be held "for the term of his natural life." This attempt to revive a right that had long been in abeyance was based on the necessity that existed for the augmentation of the number of the law lords who constituted the tribunal of appeal in the last resort, which in theory was composed of the whole House of Lords. The number of law lords was too small, and many of them were

superannuated, so that there was often difficulty in obtaining a sufficient attendance; and even when they did attend, the appeal frequently was from a more competent to a less competent court. There could be no doubt that no person better qualified than Sir James Parke to fill the office of judge of appeal in the last resort could have been selected. He was an able lawyer, a profound scholar, a very acute and experienced judge, a man of dignified appearance, good character, and high reputation. As his only child was a daughter, the non-hereditary character of his peerage was to him a matter of little moment, but this circumstance made it all the more evident that the appointment was made by the government for the purpose of establishing a precedent, and it was naturally regarded with great jealousy by many peers, who feared that, if the attempt succeeded in this instance, the government would try to strengthen their party in the House, and perhaps even to change their minority into a majority, by the creation of a large number of life-peers; a proceeding calculated, in their opinion, to impair the dignity and importance of the House, and to which many of the supporters of the government entertained as strong an objection as the Tories themselves. They feared that if this claim were once admitted, the hereditary peerage would be gradually transformed into a life-senate. There was, therefore, a very strong feeling in the House against the proposed innovation; and Lord Lyndhurst, then just eighty-eight years old, put himself at the head of the opposition to it. The ministers, and those who supported them, argued that as there was already in the House a bench of bishops holding their seats for life, so too there might very conveniently be a bench of lawyers holding their seats on the same condition, that it, on the one hand, there was a danger that the precedent set in the case of Lord Wensleydale should be followed too frequently, there was, on the other hand, at least an equal danger that, in attempting to keep up the appellate jurisdiction of the House by the appointment of a sufficient number of hereditary peers, many comparatively poor men might be introduced into the House, and detract from the weight and influence it possessed in virtue of the large territorial estates possessed by most of its members. It was asked by the opposition, if the crown can revive a right which has slept for so many centuries, why might it not revive other rights that had been dormant for a much shorter period? Why, for instance, might it not appoint members of the House of Commons? It was also asked: "If the crown can, by its independent and unsupported

action, reform the House of Lords, why should it not also have the power to reform the House of Commons without the concurrence of the other branches of the legislature?" Three great legal authorities who seldom agreed on any point were united in strenuous opposition to this change—Lords Lyndhurst, Brougham, and Campbell. The lord chancellor, on the other hand, who was probably the author of the proposal, zealously supported it. The ancient original patents, discoloured and almost illegible, of Guiscard d'Angle, created Earl of Huntingdon, and of De Vere, Earl of Oxford, created successively Marquis and Duke of Dublin in the reign of Richard II., were produced and read to the House in the original Latin. After much discussion, and the proposal of a great number of resolutions, the government yielded, and conferred on Sir James Parke a patent of peerage drawn up in the usual form.

The treaty of peace was signed at Paris, on Sunday, the 30th of March, but, as the ratifications were not exchanged, the conditions on which it was concluded were not made public. The event itself was, however, proclaimed, with the usual formalities, by the Lord Mayor, on the day following, from the front of the Mansion House and at the Royal Exchange. The roar of the Tower guns and of cannon placed in St James's Park made the joyful tidings known through the metropolis, and was immediately followed by the ringing of the bells of the different churches, and other tokens of rejoicing.

In every age the crime of the poisoner has justly been regarded with an intense and peculiar detestation, but that detestation is aggravated when the murderer is one that approaches his victim with professions of friendship; and the deep abhorrence with which the criminal and his crime are regarded is still farther intensified when he abuses the confidence placed in him as a medical man, and, while pretending to give a healing draught, administers a deadly potion. The crimes of which William Palmer, a surgeon, of Rugeley, in Staffordshire, was accused, presented all these features of atrocity, and many others besides. They had been planned and carried out by him in the most deliberate and cold-blooded manner. In order to obtain some money from a person of the name of Cook, with whom he had been on terms of professed friendship, he first forged a cheque; then, to prevent discovery, he attempted to poison him with antimony, and at length effected his purpose by administering strychnine in pills. His trial for this offence commenced on the 14th of May, and was con-

tinued over twelve days, at the end of which time he was convicted; but the evidence produced at the trial showed that this was neither his only nor his most atrocious crime. There can be no doubt that, after having compelled his unhappy wife to commit a forgery, he had poisoned her; that he had destroyed his mother and his brother, as well as several of his acquaintances, by the same means and from the same motives. These atrocious crimes served to draw public attention to the defective state of the law with regard to the sale of poisons. Lord Chief-Justice Campbell inquired, in his place in the House of Lords, whether the government intended to bring in a measure dealing with the subject, and was told in reply that a bill was being prepared by the home secretary.

The war with Russia had left behind it a dispute with the United States. In accordance with the provisions of the foreign-enlistment bill, carried during the last session, American citizens had been induced to enter into the service of the queen, and it was somewhat angrily complained that this had been done in violation of the laws of the States as well as of international law. The English government at once put a stop to the enlistment of American citizens, and tendered a full apology to the American government; but it was very ungraciously received, and our minister at Washington was summarily and somewhat insultingly dismissed. The conduct of the American government roused a strong feeling of indignation in England, and, on the other hand, the ill-temper of the Americans was exasperated when they learnt that one of the attachés of the American minister at London had been refused admission to the queen's levee because he appeared there in a dress which did not conform to the regulations of the court of St. James's. While the ill-feeling on both sides was at its height, a motion was brought forward in the House of Commons by Mr Moore, which was in fact a censure on the ministry for their conduct in reference to this matter. He was supported not only by those who thought with him that the Americans really had good reason to complain of the conduct of the government in reference to the matter, but also by many Conservatives, whose object was to gain a party advantage, while others, like Mr. Spooner, without giving any opinion on the conduct of the government, declined to join in this attempt to embarrass them. Eventually the motion was treated as a vote of want of confidence in the ministry, and rejected by a majority of 274 to 80.

Little needs to be said with regard to the general legislation of this year. If the two war sessions had been legislatively barren,

the first peace session that followed them was not more prolific. The government had promised few measures in the queen's speech at the commencement of the session, and their performances fell short of their promises. They carried absolutely nothing that exercised any appreciable influence on the progress and prosperity of the nation, or the development of its resources. The expenses which the war entailed, even after its close, made it necessary that 5,000,000*l.* should be raised above the ordinary revenue of the year; and it was proposed and agreed that this should be effected, not by additional taxation, but by a loan, which was negotiated without difficulty.

Towards the close of this year a fraud of a very extensive character on the shareholders of the Crystal Palace was brought to light. A man named Robson, in the service of the company, was found to have sold forged transfers of the stock to the amount of 27,000*l.*, which he had appropriated to his own purposes. But this robbery was completely eclipsed by the discovery which was soon after made of frauds practised on the Great Northern Railway Company by one of its servants named Leopold Redpath, who by means of fictitious capital had defrauded the company to the extent of 250,000*l.* Both these offenders were arrested, tried, and convicted. The former was sentenced to twenty years' transportation for larcenies of which he had been guilty and fourteen years for forgery; the latter was punished with transportation for life.

On the whole, the year 1856, which had commenced with the gloomy prospect of prolonged war, closed under far happier auspices. Peace had been obtained on terms which satisfied the pride of the nation, though they did not entirely answer its highly raised expectations. The dispute with the United States respecting the enlistment question had gradually subsided. A thoroughly good understanding prevailed between England and the other Great Powers of Europe. For a moment, indeed, it had seemed likely that England would have been replunged into war with Russia without the aid of France; but Russia yielded, and the threatening cloud passed away. The alliance with France continued to be as cordial as ever, and promised to lead to amicable and commercial relations between the two countries of so intimate a nature as to place it almost out of the power of any government to disturb them. It appeared as if the union thus happily cemented would secure the general peace of Europe, and that the English government, now released from all doubt and anxiety with regard to the Eastern question, would soon be enabled to re-enter that path of fiscal and

financial reform which had so greatly increased the prosperity of the nation, and which, it was hoped, would be resumed and carried forward now that the causes which had interrupted it had been removed. But events soon occurred which deferred the fulfilment of these expectations for several years.

The parliamentary session of the year 1857 was opened on the 3rd of February. The royal message read did not afford a prospect of greater legislative activity than had distinguished the session that had followed the breaking-out of the Crimean war. The only subjects it recommended to the attention of parliament were legal and banking reform.

One of the earliest questions with which the House of Commons was called upon to deal, related to the manner in which our criminal population should be disposed of. It occurred to Mr. H. Mayhew that some very useful light might be thrown on the subject by the criminals themselves. Accordingly he called a meeting of ticket-of-leave men, at Farringdon Hall, and laid before them the questions on which he wished to consult them. Some interesting information was elicited from this curious assembly. They energetically repudiated and condemned the practice of garrotting. They bore testimony to the difficulty, amounting almost to impossibility, which most of them found in obtaining any kind of employment; though a few of them stated that they had been more fortunate in this respect than their fellow-convicts, and had been able to maintain themselves and their families in a position of respectability. They unanimously and unhesitatingly declared their preference of a ticket-of-leave in the colonies to a ticket-of-leave in England.

The question on which this meeting was intended to throw light was brought before the House of Commons by Sir George Grey on Monday, the 9th of February. The subject of transportation had for some years past been forced on the serious consideration of the executive and the legislature owing to the natural reluctance displayed by the inhabitants of many of our colonies to receive our outcast population. As early as the year 1840 the Archbishop of Dublin in the Lords, and Sir W. Molesworth in the Commons, had proposed the complete abolition of this punishment; and the government so far yielded as to abandon the practice with regard to most of our colonies, reserving only Western Australia as a place to which convicts might still be sent. This arrangement necessitated the substitution of some other punishment for that of transportation; and in 1853 Lord Chan-

cellor Cranworth introduced into the Upper House a bill for that purpose. He proposed that the penalty of transportation should be retained only in the case of those who had committed offences which rendered them liable to be transported for fourteen years and upwards—such as receivers of stolen goods; persons who had been guilty of outrages, violent assaults, or attempts to do grievous bodily harm; housebreakers, burglars, and cattle-stealers; that those who were convicted of offences which up to this time had been punished with transportation for seven years, should henceforth be kept in penal servitude, and should in case of good conduct receive a remission of their punishment, under the ticket-of-leave system. This last portion of the bill was strongly opposed in the House of Commons by Mr. Keating, but the measure was ultimately passed. This act had been found by experience to be insufficient for the object it had in view, and the bill now brought forward by the home secretary was designed to improve it. The measure was based on the recommendation of a committee of the House of Commons, which had been engaged in investigating the subject, and which had come to the conclusion that the duration of penal servitude should be lengthened, so as to make it equal to the punishment of transportation, for which it had been substituted; and that the sentence might be carried out either by the infliction of penal servitude at home, or of transportation to Western Australia, where the colonists were still willing to accept convicts, on account of the difficulty of obtaining a sufficient number of labourers. Sir G. Grey, after explaining the circumstances under which the ticket-of-leave and the licensing systems, now both confounded under the general name of ticket-of-leave, had been adopted, and the extent to which they had been carried, pointed out that the real difficulty was not what they are to do when working out their sentence, but what they are to do after it has expired. The changes he proposed to introduce were these:—

1. To lengthen the term of sentence of penal servitude to an equal duration with that of the periods of transportation for which they are substituted.

2. To give the judges a discretionary power to pass sentences of intermediate severity between those of ordinary imprisonment and the minimum of transportation.

3. To allow prisoners sentenced to penal servitude to be removed to certain colonies.

4. To continue the practice of mitigating sentences as a reward for good conduct in prison; but to restrict the range of

their remission within much narrower limits, while rendering the discharges, generally speaking, unconditional.

On Monday, the 19th of February, the House of Commons was engaged in discharging the unusual duty of expelling a delinquent member—Mr. James Sadlier, member for Tipperary, whom plain-spoken Mr. Roebuck did not hesitate to stigmatize, and justly too, as a “thief” and a “swindler.” This “honourable” gentleman, and his “honourable” brother, Mr. John Sadlier, member for Sligo, had been deeply concerned in a series of fraudulent banking transactions, by which they had brought grief and ruin upon thousands. Mr. John Sadlier committed suicide, and his brother James fled from justice. A motion for his expulsion made last session failed through the opposition of government, which regarded it as premature. Now, however, the motion, made with the full approval of the cabinet, by the attorney-general for Ireland, was seconded by Mr. G. Butt, and agreed to without opposition.

The budget was brought forward only ten days after the opening of the session. It was conceived in the spirit of those great financial reforms which Sir R. Peel had so successfully commenced, and Mr. Gladstone had so ably carried on, affording a hope that, when the debts incurred during the war had been paid off, fresh financial and fiscal progress would be effected; but it was not allowed to pass without opposition. The chief struggle took place on an amendment moved by Mr. Disraeli. The debate to which it gave rise was remarkable on account of the great confusion of parties which it exhibited. On the one hand Mr. Gladstone and Sir James Graham spoke and voted in favour of Mr. Disraeli's motion; while Messrs. Milner Gibson, Cobden, and Sidney Herbert supported the ministry, which nevertheless triumphed by the decisive majority of eighty.

The government was less successful in its attempt to oppose a motion made by Mr. Cobden condemning their conduct in reference to the measures resorted to at Canton in the affair of the *Arrow*, and proposing the appointment of a select committee to inquire into the state of our commercial relations with China. The conduct of the government was assailed by Mr. Cobden, Mr. Gladstone, Sir J. Graham, Lord J. Russell, and Mr. Disraeli, and was defended with great spirit by Lord Palmerston. But a strong feeling prevailed that the government had one rule for the weak and another for the strong, and that the conduct of Sir J. Bowring, our plenipotentiary, had been characterized by overbearing insolence towards the Chinese authorities. The discussion turned principally on the somewhat technical question whether the lorch *Arrow*, which had been

boarded by the Chinese, was legally an English vessel. As the debate proceeded, the interest it awakened increased, because it became more and more evident that it involved the fate of the government; and though it was generally expected, even by the mover of the resolution and his supporters, that it would be rejected, yet some hopes were entertained that it would succeed. While the matter was still in suspense, meetings were held on the one hand by the opposition, and on the other by the friends of the government, at each of which it was resolved that all their strength should be put forth to secure a result favourable to their party. The government had lost many supporters through the indifference they had manifested on the question of reform. Two motions had been brought forward relating to this question, one by Mr. Locke King, and one by Sir J. Walmsley, both of which had been opposed by the government, and, mainly through their opposition, rejected by large majorities, without any pledge having been given, or expectation held out, that ministers would take up the question of parliamentary reform at any future time. The division was therefore likely to be a close one; and was anticipated with that feeling of earnestness and trepidation which is only excited when some great interest is at stake, or the fate of a government is in the balance.

When the House divided the numbers were:—

For Mr. Cobden's resolution	...	...	...	263
Against	...	...	...	217
Majority against the government				16

On the evening of Thursday, March 5, Lord Granville in the House of Lords, and Lord Palmerston in the House of Commons, announced the decision at which the government had arrived in consequence of the adverse vote that had been given. They stated that the government had determined not to resign, but to dissolve; and they justified this resolution by referring to the impossibility of forming any government whatever that could carry on the business of the House with the present parliament. They also observed that the parliament had already reached a greater age than most of its predecessors. They explained that if the state of public business had admitted an immediate dissolution, parliament would have been dissolved at once. But the estimates were not voted, the taxes were not arranged, the mutiny bill was not passed, and would expire before parliament could reassemble. It was proposed that

when these and other necessary measures had been carried, the dissolution should take place; and ministers begged the members of the two Houses to abstain from throwing obstacles in the way of the appeal to the nation being made as speedily as possible. Some dissatisfaction was expressed at the silence of ministers on the subject of the vote which had been carried against them; but all the efforts of their opponents failed to elicit from them any other information than that the policy of the government with regard to China would continue to be what it always had been—a policy for the protection and promotion of British interests, and that the question of the continuance or recall of Sir J. Bowring as plenipotentiary at Hong-Kong was one that had been, and still was, under the grave consideration of the cabinet.

The thoughts of all were now fixed on the coming electoral struggle. Members hurried down to the places they represented, or spoke not so much to the House as to their constituents; bills were pushed through or dropped as speedily as the forms of the House would allow; and Mr Shaw Lefevre, the Speaker of the moribund parliament, who now finally retired from the chair, was thanked and praised for his services, as he richly deserved to be; the leaders of the different parties in the House warmly eulogizing him, and the members showing their respect by remaining uncovered while he delivered his valedictory address. A provisional budget went rapidly through its various stages, all men helping it forward. Lord Derby took advantage of the second reading of the Income Tax Bill to place before the country a programme of the policy of the Conservative party. By Wednesday, the 18th of March, the necessary business of parliament had been so far completed that the Commons were able to adjourn to Saturday, and then the two Houses were prorogued with the ordinary formalities, and with a message of more than usual brevity.

The issue on which the country was invited to give its decision by the general election was simply confidence, or want of confidence, in Lord Palmerston. He had earned much popularity and a high reputation by the vigour with which he had carried on the Crimean war, and the manner in which he had brought it to a conclusion. Had the terms been very closely scanned, they might have been found not to have really accomplished as much as was supposed; but the people generally were willing to regard them as satisfactory, and were contented to know that Lord Palmerston had carried on the war with vigour and ability, had brought it to a speedy termination, and had firmly enforced the conditions he had obtained.

Another circumstance that strongly biassed the constituencies in his favour was that accounts came pouring in of the frightful atrocities perpetrated by the Chinese—the poisoning of the wells, the poisoning of the bread by the bakers, the cold-blooded murder of many Europeans, the horrible and disgusting details of the execution of between sixty and seventy thousand Chinese in the course of a few months.

The news of the conclusion of peace with Persia reached this country just too late to influence the division on the Chinese question; but soon enough to swell the strong tide of popular feeling in favour of Lord Palmerston which was rising among the constituencies. The premier had also won golden opinions from the Evangelicals by his appointment of bishops who belonged to that party. He was eulogized by them as “the true Protestant,” “the Christian premier,” “the man of God.” Altogether the appeal to the country was made under a favourable conjunction of circumstances such as rarely, if ever, had occurred at any previous election, and the supporters of the government triumphed very largely, while that party which had brought about its defeat and the condemnation of its Chinese policy—the great party which had procured the repeal of the corn-laws, which had enabled Peel and Gladstone to carry out their excellent financial measures, which had most strenuously contended for retrenchment and reform—was almost everywhere defeated. Cobden, Bright, Milner Gibson, Fex, were all rejected by the constituencies which had previously elected them by large majorities, and that, too, confessedly without any change of opinion on their part. They maintained consistently the principles they had always professed; but their constituents deliberately adopted the war-policy, of which Palmerston was the foremost representative, instead of the peace-policy, of which the rejected statesmen were the zealous and consistent advocates. The election which of all others produced the greatest moral effect on the country was that for Manchester, hitherto represented by Messrs. Bright and Milner Gibson. The former gentleman was prevented from being present at the election by an illness brought on by the earnest diligence with which he had served his constituents and his country. His interests, however, did not seriously suffer by his absence; but the result of the poll showed how great had been the change in the views and sentiments of the electors. The numbers were: Sir J. Potter, 8368; Mr. J. A. Turner, 7854; Mr. Gibson, 5588; Mr. Bright, 5458.

This result had been obtained by a coalition of Conservatives

and Palmerstonian Whigs against the more advanced Liberal party. Mr. Bright took leave of the electors of the great city which he had so ably and faithfully represented in an address which concluded with these words:—

“In taking leave of you and of public life, let me assure you that I can never forget the many, the innumerable kindnesses I have received from my friends among you. No one will rejoice more than I shall in all that brings you prosperity and honour; and I am not without a hope that, when a calmer hour shall come, you will say of Mr. Gibson and of me, that, as colleagues in your representation for ten years, we have not sacrificed our principles to gain popularity, or bartered our independence for the emoluments of office or the favours of the great. I feel that we have stood for the rights and interests and freedom of the people, and that we have not tarnished the honour or lessened the renown of your eminent city.”

The calm dignity with which Mr. Bright relinquished public life, as it then seemed for ever, excited a profound sensation and a deep sympathy for him, even amongst the more generous of his opponents. They could not but feel that unswerving consistency and honest and highly able services had met with a very undeserved recompense. As far as Mr. Bright was personally concerned, the decision of his constituents was probably a fortunate one; for he was at the time of his rejection suffering from a severe illness, which the attempts he would probably have made to discharge the duties devolving on him as the representative of such a constituency as Manchester would have seriously and perhaps fatally aggravated. As it was, he was enabled to enjoy that complete rest and perfect exemption from care and anxiety that were the indispensable conditions of his recovery. Scarcely less sympathy was felt for Mr. Cobden, who had been defeated, though by a much smaller majority, at Huddersfield.

Naturally the election for the city of London excited great attention. The candidature of Lord John Russell gave to this contest the character of a struggle in the metropolitan constituency of the empire in favour of or against reform; a question on which the sentiments of Lord Palmerston were, to say the least, doubtful. The election of Lord J. Russell, who stood third on the poll, might be regarded as a declaration in favour of the party which advocated farther parliamentary reforms. Indeed, though the constituencies had, by great majorities supported and approved the foreign policy of Lord Palmerston, and rejected some of the most advanced and

thorough-going reformers, they had on the whole supported men who on this question were disposed to go farther than Lord Palmerston, whom Mr. Disraeli correctly described as "the Tory chief of a Radical cabinet;"* so that the question of parliamentary reform seemed likely to be a greater difficulty in the new parliament than it had been in the old.

From these political struggles we may turn for a moment to contemplate the condition of a class of persons who needed the interference of the legislature to lift them out of the filth, the corruption, the moral, intellectual, and physical degradation in which they were sunk. Dr. Lethby had been appointed to inquire into their condition; and his report revealed a state of things on which we may congratulate ourselves that, if not entirely removed, it has been greatly ameliorated. The doctor visited 2208 rooms in the eastern district of the city of London, inhabited by beggars, vagrants, thieves, prostitutes, persons unable to obtain work, or doing work that was miserably remunerated. Of these rooms, 219 were untenanted at the time of his inspection; the remaining 1989 contained 5791 inmates, belonging to 1576 families. In many instances he found adults of both sexes belonging to different families lodged in the same room, "regardless," as he forcibly puts it, "of all the common decencies of life; and where from three to five adults, men and women, besides a train of children, are accustomed to herd together like brute beasts, or savages; where all the offices of nature are performed in the most public and offensive manner, and where every human instinct of propriety and decency is smothered. Like my predecessor, I have seen grown persons of both sexes sleeping in common with their parents; brothers and sisters and cousins, and even the casual acquaintance of a day's tramp, occupying the same bed of filthy rags or straw; a woman suffering in travail in the midst of males and females of different families that tenant the same room—where birth and death go hand in hand—where the child but newly born, the patient cast down with fever, and the corpse waiting for interment, have no separation from each other and from the rest of the inmates." These horrors Dr. Lethby declared not to be at all exceptional. He cited other instances of the dreadful state of degradation which his examinations revealed. In Rose-ally, near Houndsditch, he found a row of houses, all in a shockingly dirty

* Lord Palmerston might have retorted by designating Mr. Disraeli as the Radical chief of a Tory party.

and ruinous condition, in which were seventy-six rooms, letting for sums varying from fifteen pence to twenty-one pence each, and inhabited by sixty-three families, consisting of two hundred and fifty-two persons. In one room there were a man, two women, two children, and the corpse of a girl who, having died in childbirth a few days before his visit, was still lying on the bare ground without shroud or coffin. Only a short time before Dr. Letheby paid his visit to Rose-ally a fever had passed from room to room, attacking almost every one of the adult males who occupied these pestiferous dens. He stated that he found the air so close and infectious that he endeavoured to ascertain, by chemical analysis, whether it did not contain some peculiar product of decomposition, that imparted to it its foul odour and its rare power of engendering disease. He found that it was not only deficient in oxygen, but contained three times the usual proportion of carbonic acid, besides a quantity of aqueous vapour charged with alkaline matter, that stank abominably, the product of putrefaction, and of various fetid and stagnant exhalations.

He likewise pointed out that the horrors which his researches had brought to light were pregnant not only with terrible physical but with terrible moral retribution to the society in which they were permitted to flourish, showing that a still deadlier moral pestilence stalks side by side with the physical pestilence, blighting the existence of a rising population, rendering their hearts hopeless, their acts ruffianly and incestuous, and causing them to scatter the seeds of crime, turbulence, and pauperism.

The remedies that Dr. Letheby suggested for these evils were to enforce the registration of common lodging-houses, to control, through officers of health, the number and condition of their inmates, and to bring the metropolis under the authority of a single municipality, elected by the ratepayers of the various districts. The state of things thus brought to light was by no means peculiar to London. Similar dens of filth and iniquity were to be found in many parts of Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dublin, and indeed in most of the large as well as in many of the smaller towns of the British empire. The attention which was drawn to the subject at this time by Dr. Letheby's reports produced a considerable improvement, and many of these human sties have been removed and improved. Lord Palmerston devoted to the work of cleansing this Augean stable the same vigour and energy that he had displayed in carrying on the war; and if such scenes as Dr. Letheby described have become almost exceptional in our day we owe it in great

measure to the firmness and resolution with which Lord Palmerston took up the question, and for which, more perhaps than for anything else he ever did, he deserves the gratitude of posterity. But though he removed the more glaring evils, much remains to be done, and is being done, not only through direct legislation on this subject—but by the extension to all classes of the community of an education which will instigate and enable them to rise out of degradation similar to that which Dr. Letheby so vividly depicted.

On Thursday, April the 30th, the new parliament assembled. Mr. Evelyn Denison, the nominee of the government, was chosen without opposition to be the Speaker of the House of Commons. The formal opening of the legislature took place on the Thursday following. During this interval the Art Treasures Exhibition in Manchester had been publicly opened. The scope and object of the exhibition is sufficiently indicated by its name. The building which contained the treasures exhibited was constructed on a plan suggested by the Crystal Palace. Prince Albert presided at the opening ceremony.

The first session of the new parliament was opened by commission on the 7th of May. Of course, meeting at so late a period of the year, and not being able to proceed to business till the middle of that month, it could not be expected to enter on the consideration of measures that were likely to require long discussions or to encounter serious opposition. The only subject of importance which was recommended to the attention of the legislature in the royal speech was the question of law reform—a question the urgency and importance of which it was impossible to overrate, but one that was not calculated to rouse strong feelings or cause prolonged debates. Lord Palmerston, however, announced that the government intended to bring forward a measure of parliamentary reform in the year 1858.

The most important legislative achievement effected during the session was the passing of a divorce bill, which was carried in spite of the persistent opposition offered to it by Mr. Gladstone. The question had occupied the attention of the legislature for many years, and it would probably have continued to occupy it for some time longer if the measure brought in by the government in the course of this session had not been zealously pressed forward by the premier. Notwithstanding all his efforts, it was at one time in great jeopardy. It was ready to go back to the Lords with the amendments of the Commons on Friday, the 21st of August, and Lord Redesdale had given notice of a motion that it should be considered that day three months. At that late period most of

the peers had left London, and it was thought that the members of the government and their adherents who remained in town would form a sufficiently large body to carry the bill through. But a great effort had been made by its opponents; and a large number of Conservative peers were brought back on the day on which Lord Redesdale's motion was to be considered. The opposition benches were filled; while the ministerial side of the House presented a very denuded appearance. There could be no doubt that the opponents of the bill were in the majority. Ministers therefore moved an adjournment. Lord Redesdale, who did not wish to let slip the favourable opportunity, vehemently protested. Lord Chancellor Cranworth, generally the mildest and most placid of men, flamed up with vehement indignation when he saw that the one ministerial achievement of the session was about to be lost. After a somewhat heated discussion, an adjournment to the following Monday was agreed to, and then ministers managed to muster a sufficient number of followers to enable them to reject Lord Redesdale's motion by a majority of two only.

Two other important measures were passed in this session—the credit due to which belongs, however, not to the government but to Lord Chief Justice Campbell—one regulating the sale of poisons; the other for the prevention of the diffusion of the moral poison of obscene publications. Another attempt made to obtain the admission of Jews into the House of Commons was again frustrated by the peers.

Before the conclusion of the session, intelligence of a very alarming character had from time to time been arriving from India. The government had determined to supply the Sepoys with rifles of an improved description. The new rifle was loaded with a greased cartridge, the end of which was bitten off by the soldier making use of it. The Sepoys suspected that the grease was made of the fat of cows and pigs, animals held in abomination by the Mahometans and Hindoos, the latter of whom would lose caste if they swallowed the smallest particle of the alleged mixture. The feeling thus roused had been farther exasperated by some indiscreet attempts at conversion supposed to be made under the sanction of the government. It was, indeed, strenuously asserted that these suspicions were not really entertained by the Sepoys; but that they were mere pretexts to excuse a revolt, which was really the result of a deep-laid and wide-spread combination against the British authority; and there is good reason to believe, as we shall presently see, that a strong spirit of disaffection prevailed very widely among the native troops, which was

encouraged by the removal of a large portion of the English force from India to take part in the Chinese war. The first open manifestation of the feeling that prevailed was made at Barrackpore. On the 23rd of January, Major-General Hearsay, who commanded there, informed the government of the reports with regard to the cartridges. A fortnight later a Sepoy soldier informed the officers at Barrackpore that the men of four regiments stationed there had been made to believe that there was a design to compel them to give up their caste and become Christians, and that in consequence they had determined to mutiny. On the 25th of February the soldiers, on receiving the order to bite off the ends of their cartridges, refused to comply. General Hearsay harangued his troops in their own language, assuring them that the government had no wish to shock their religious convictions, but desired to treat them with respect and allow them full freedom of belief. His explanations appeared, at the time, to have produced their intended effect. But on the day following the Sepoys broke into the huts in which their arms were kept, and took possession of them. The only troops at the station when this occurred were some cavalry and a battery of artillery. These were sent out at night against the mutineers. It was doubtful whether they could be depended on, and even more doubtful whether, if they acted with all possible vigour and fidelity, they could subdue the revolvers. Under these circumstances the commanding officer made a somewhat ignominious compromise. However, the Indian government acted with a promptitude which stopped the farther spread of the revolt. British troops and artillery were despatched to Barrackpore, the mutinous regiments were disbanded, and it was hoped that the danger had passed. This hope might perhaps have been realized but for one of those acts of folly and negligence by which our Indian empire has often been jeopardized. Although the government had ordered that the practice of biting the cartridges, which had so alarmed the religious prejudices of the native troops, should be discontinued, the practice was still enforced in some cases, and this naturally increased the suspicions and discontent of the native soldiery, and soon produced terrible consequences.

On the 2nd of May, the 7th Oude Irregular Cavalry, stationed near Lucknow, refused to bite their cartridges, and communicated their discontent to the Sepoys stationed at Lucknow. As soon as the news of this mutiny reached Sir Henry Lawrence, who commanded the troops in that part of India, he marched against the

mutineers with his whole disposable force. They were at once disarmed; and most of the native officers, and those of the privates who were known to have taken a leading part in the acts of insubordination, were dismissed. At Meerut a mutiny broke out a few days after, and, being encountered with less decision, became more formidable. In this station the new regulation had been acted on, but it was too late then to remove the suspicions of the Sepoys. When the men were ordered to tear their cartridges, instead of biting them, they refused to touch them. The recusants were apprehended, tried by court-martial, and imprisoned; but, though there were several indications of a disaffected spirit among the troops, no farther steps were taken. All, however, passed quietly until the morning of Sunday, the 10th. A conspiracy had been formed among the Sepoys to attack our troops while they were attending afternoon service, when most of them would have been unarmed. Fortunately the impatience of the mutineers caused them to break out into mutiny before the troops had gone to church. However, one party galloped to the gaol, and liberated the prisoners who were confined there. Colonel Finnis, while remonstrating with the mutineers, was shot by them. Then they broke out into unrestrained violence. The dwellings of the Europeans were fired, and every man, woman, or child that fell into their hands was savagely butchered. In these acts of violence the native troops were supported and aided by their countrymen at Meerut. All this was done in the immediate vicinity of an English force strong enough to have annihilated the mutineers. But the poor old general who commanded at this station was unable to act with the vigour that the circumstances required. However, the troops were brought up. They charged the mutineers, pouring on them a fire of grape and musketry, which compelled them to retire in confusion. Had they been properly pursued, they might have been arrested in their flight; as it was, they were followed for some distance by the Carabineers, who killed many of them. The rest made their way to Delhi, and entered that city. They were joined by the native troops there, and became masters of the city, where they practised frightful atrocities, sparing neither sex nor age, treating women with the most shocking indecency and cruelty, and tossing the children on their bayonets before the eyes of their mothers. A handful of Europeans, who garrisoned the magazine of the city, defended it to the last extremity and then blew it up, and with it a large number of the mutineers. The ex-king of Delhi, who still resided in his ancient capital, readily consented to resume his

royal dignity and to put himself at the head of the revolt. His eldest son was appointed commander-in-chief of the rebel forces.

Their success, greatly exaggerated, caused the rebellion to spread throughout Bengal, and necessitated the reconquest of that vast territory. At Lahore, the chief commissioner, having at his disposal a force of only eight hundred and fifty men, of whom he could only employ a portion, disarmed 3500 Sepoys, and by this act of firmness prevented them from joining their revolted comrades. In some places the disarmament of the Sepoys was carried out with equal resolution and success. In others, either from the incapacity of the officer in command, or for want of a sufficient European force to support his authority, the disarmament was not effected. Whenever the mutineers were successful, they were guilty of the same horrible brutahities that had attended their triumph at Delhi; not only officers and soldiers, but also civilians of all ages, being put to death in the most savage manner, often in disregard of distinct and solemn stipulations.

The Indian government lost no time in despatching all the troops that could be spared to besiege the rebellious city; and a few days later the governor-general issued a proclamation, in which he contradicted the report that the government intended to interfere with the religion of the natives or with the institution of caste, which formed a part of the Hindoo system of belief. This proclamation was followed by another issued by Sir J. R. Colvin, the governor of the north-western provinces of our Indian empire. In it he promised the rebellious Sepoys that, if they would give up their arms at the nearest civil or military post, and retire quietly to their homes, they should not be molested; but that all who appeared in arms, after the contents of this proclamation had been made known to them, should be treated as open enemies. This document was vehemently censured as being dictated by an excessive and mistimed leniency, and was disavowed by the government at Calcutta. It is difficult for those who are remote from the scene of action to form a correct opinion on the subject, and it may therefore seem presumptuous to express one. But it certainly does appear to have been just and politic to allow the Sepoys, many of whom had been reluctantly forced into rebellion by their comrades, or who had been carried away by an honest though mistaken fanaticism, an opportunity of retiring from the rebellion. Be this as it may, the proclamations that had been issued did not prevent the rebellion from spreading rapidly. A portion of the newly annexed kingdom of Oude had already revolted, and Sir H.

Lawrence, who commanded there, was at this critical moment suffering from severe illness. However, he put forth his best efforts to meet the danger. As a mutiny of the native troops was evidently impending, he fortified and provisioned the residency; and, as soon as he was sufficiently recovered to place himself at the head of his troops, he marched out against a body of the rebels stationed at a place called Chinhut; but finding them to be in greater numbers than he had expected, he retired. His retreat was followed by the mutiny of the native troops at Lucknow, who had hitherto held aloof from the revolt. They were at once attacked by a part of the 32nd Regiment, and, artillery having been brought to bear on them, were driven to Moodripore, where they were joined by another Sepoy regiment.

While the handful of English in Lucknow were thus imperilled, the position of those at Cawnpore was even more critical. Nana Sahib, the chief of Bithoor, resided near that place, and had a considerable native force under his command. He was crafty, savage, covetous, and ambitious; but by education, and constant association with English officers and civilians, he had acquired a superficial refinement rarely attained by his countrymen at that time, and was often pointed out as a person zealously attached to the British government, and a favourable specimen of the highly polished and cultivated Hindoo. It is not improbable that he hesitated a good deal before he determined which side he should take. Inclination and interest prompted him to promote the success of his countrymen, by contributing to which an almost boundless prospect was opened to his ambition; but his superior attainments made him better acquainted with the greatness of British resources, and enabled him to estimate more correctly than most of his countrymen the arduous character of the struggle in which they were engaged. Whatever, therefore, his secret inclinations may have been, he professed himself the ally of the British, and sent troops to their assistance, placing them under General Wheeler, who commanded at Cawnpore. These troops were unfortunately employed to defend the treasury, well replenished, and close to the magazine, which was strongly fortified, and might easily have been defended against any force that the rebels could have brought against it. General Wheeler, with the force under his command, and most of the residents, retired to a retrenchment which was far less defensible. Whether Nana Sahib had ever intended that the soldiers he had sent to Cawnpore should really help us may well be doubted. At all events, they joined

their revolted countrymen, plundered the treasury they had been appointed to guard, and attempted to take possession of the magazine, which was blown up by Sir H. Wheeler's orders, that it might not fall into their hands. Then Nana Sahib put himself at the head of the revolted troops, and commenced an attack on the entrenchment. Sir H. Wheeler prepared to defend it as well as he could against an immensely superior force, well supplied with all kinds of arms and ammunition. He despatched several applications for aid to Sir H. Lawrence, assuring him that if he could only have a reinforcement of two hundred men, he could sally out on the besiegers and capture their guns. But Sir H. Lawrence was himself too hard pressed to be able to spare a single man. Wheeler • was therefore obliged to surrender, but the terms of the capitulation were completely disregarded—the soldiers were treacherously murdered almost to a man; the women and children, imprisoned for the present, were reserved for a more terrible fate.

Meanwhile the siege of Delhi was carried on, up to the 14th of September, on which day our troops blew open with gunpowder the Cashmere gate, and forced their way into the city. Still the rebels made an obstinate resistance. On the 15th our troops, having got possession of some liquor, became intoxicated to such a degree that it became doubtful whether it would not be necessary to evacuate the city, and retire to the position that had been occupied outside it. However, the liquor was destroyed, and the enemy, not being aware of the condition to which our men were reduced, made no attack. When the intoxication had passed away, order was restored, and the operations for the reduction of the rest of the city were pushed forward. On the 20th of September all resistance had been overcome, and the British were undisputed masters of the city.

The greatest anxiety still prevailed with regard to our countrymen and countrywomen at Lucknow and Cawnpore. The Indian government made every effort to relieve them; but the reinforcements which had been despatched from England and China came in slowly, and the demands made for assistance far exceeded the means at the disposal of the government. At this conjuncture Sir Henry Lawrence died from the effects of a wound caused by the bursting of a shell. His death rendered the position of the British at Lucknow more critical than ever. The task of relieving the city was entrusted to General Havelock, who marched out with a handful of men, of whom only 1400 were British soldiers, to encounter a large army and a whole country in rebellion. At

Futteeport, on the 12th of July, he defeated a vastly superior force, posted in a very strong position. After giving his men a day's rest, he advanced again on the 14th, and routed the enemy in two pitched battles. Next morning he renewed his advance, and with a force of less than 900 men attacked 5000 strongly entrenched, and commanded by Nana Sahib. They were outmanœuvred, outflanked, beaten, and dispersed. For this signal defeat they wreaked their vengeance on the unfortunate women and children who remained at Cawnpore. On the very day on which the battle occurred they were massacred under circumstances of cruelty over which we must throw a veil. The well of Cawnpore, in which their hacked, and mutilated bodies were flung, presented a spectacle from which soldiers who had regarded unmoved the carnage of numerous battle-fields shrank with horror. Of all the atrocities perpetrated during a war so fruitful in horrors, this was the most awful; and it was followed by a terrible retribution. It steeled the hearts, and lent a furious and fearless energy to the arms, of the British soldiery. Wherever they came they gave no quarter to the mutineers; a few men often frantically attacked hundreds, frantically but vainly defending themselves, and never ceased till all had been bayoneted, shot, or hewn in pieces. All those who could be shown to have been accomplices in the perpetration of the murders that had been committed were hanged, or blown from the cannon's mouth.

Havelock, though unable to save the women and children who had been imprisoned in Cawnpore, pressed forward to Lucknow. But the force under his command was too small to enable him to drive off the enemy. Meanwhile Sir J. Outram, who was now returning from the Persian war, which had been brought to a successful conclusion, was sent to Oude as chief commissioner, with full civil and military power. This appointment was fully deserved; but it had the effect, probably not thought of by those who made it, of superseding Havelock just as he was about to achieve the crowning success of his rapid and glorious career. Outram, with a generosity which did him more real honour than a thousand victories would have conferred, wrote to Havelock to inform him that he intended to join him with adequate reinforcements; adding: "To you shall be left the glory of relieving Lucknow, for which you have already struggled so much. I shall accompany you only in my civil capacity as commissioner, placing my military service at your

disposal, should you please, and serving under you as a volunteer." Havelock, after gaining no fewer than twelve battles against forces far superior in numbers to the little band he originally led, was enabled, on the 25th of August, to preserve the civilians, the women, and children of Lucknow from the impending horrors of another massacre, which would probably have been as fearful as that of Cawnpore. The Highlanders were the first to enter, and were welcomed with grateful enthusiasm by those whom they had saved from a fate worse than death. However, the enemy, recovering from the panic which the arrival of Havelock and his troops had caused, renewed the siege. Sir Colin Campbell, who had assumed the command of the Indian army, marched to the relief of Lucknow. He set out from Cawnpore on the 9th of November, but was obliged to wait till the 14th for reinforcements, which raised the force under his command to 5000. On the 17th of November the relief of Lucknow was effected. The music of the Highland regiments, playing "The Campbells are coming," announced that the commander-in-chief himself was with the relieving force. Little time, however, was allowed for congratulations and rejoicings. The ladies, the civilians, and the garrison were quietly withdrawn; the guns, which it was thought not desirable to remove, were burst; and a retreat effected, without affording the enemy the slightest suspicion of what was going on until some hours after the town had been evacuated. The retreating force reached Dilkoosha on the 24th, without having sustained any serious molestation. There the gallant Havelock sank under the hardships to which he had been exposed, and yielded up the life which had been instrumental in preserving so many others from the most terrible of deaths.

While Sir Colin Campbell was engaged in effecting the relief of Lucknow, intelligence reached Cawnpore that a large hostile army was marching towards it. General Windham, who commanded there, unacquainted with the number or the position of the approaching force, went forth to meet it, in the hope that he should be able to rout and cut up the advanced guard before the main body could come to its assistance. But in this he was disappointed. Instead of having to deal with the van, he found himself engaged with the whole rebel army, and his little force, assailed on all sides, was obliged to retire. He despatched a letter to the commander-in-chief, requesting him to hasten to his assistance; but it was intercepted by the enemy. Fortunately Sir Colin, though ignorant of the critical position of his subordinate, came up on the 28th of

November, when the danger was at its height. His first care was for the safety of the civilians, the women, and the children, which was not secured till the 30th; and he continued to protect them till the 5th of December, when they were all safely lodged at Allahabad. The enemy, unaware of the motive of his seeming inaction, imputed it to fear, and became every day more confident and audacious. On the 6th he at length turned fiercely on them, completely defeated them, and seized their baggage; then dispersed and drove away another large force, under the command of Nana Sahib, which was watching the engagement at a little distance. The army entered the residence of Nana Sahib at Bithoor, and took possession of much treasure, which had been concealed in a well. Lucknow, being no longer garrisoned, had fallen into the hands of the insurgents; but they were not long permitted to retain it. Strong reinforcements had arrived, and the Indian government sent a force against it, sufficient to overwhelm all resistance; and on the 15th of December this important city was in the undisputed possession of the British troops. This final recovery of the capital of Oude decided the reconquest of that country. A struggle was, indeed, maintained for some time longer; innumerable battles were fought; and the final subjugation of the country was effected in the month of June, 1858.

When the news of the Mutiny began to reach England, it was generally received with that *insouciance* which has almost always been displayed with regard to the affairs of the vast and important part of our empire in which it occurred. It was assumed that the outbreaks had been suppressed, or easily would be; and that the next mail would announce their complete extinction, and the condign punishment of those who had taken part in them. And when the mutiny had grown into a revolt, and the revolt into a rebellion, the feeling was still the same; a feeling of perhaps overweening confidence in the force and fortune of England. When one Sepoy regiment after another was joining the rebellion; when at one post after another the Europeans were massacred or driven away; when mail after mail brought home news that Delhi was still holding out, that Lucknow was still beleaguered, and that a gigantic effort was being made by the natives of a great portion of India to chase the handful of English out of their country; and above all, when accounts of the more and more frightful atrocities practised on our countrymen and countrywomen reached our shores, then a very different feeling arose; not a feeling of fear—for throughout the whole of this critical struggle the English

people never realized the greatness of the danger that threatened our government of India—but a cry for vengeance, and an urgent demand that all the resources of the nation should be put forth to maintain our authority and inflict condign punishment on the perpetrators of the crimes that had been committed. These feelings were rendered all the more intense, and these demands all the more loud and imperious, by the terrors and anxieties of the numerous families having relatives or friends in India, who did not know whether they had not already fallen or might not be the next victims of the ferocity of the revolted Sepoys.

While this excitement of the public mind was at its height, the subject of the Indian rebellion was brought before the House of Commons by Mr. Disraeli. It was on Monday, the 25th of July, that his motion was made, and the interest with which the debate was regarded was intensified by the circumstance that the public mind was in a state of feverish impatience for the arrival of the Indian mail, already several days overdue. Mr. Disraeli's motion was for papers; but he delivered a three hours' speech, which he concluded by recommending that a royal commission should instantly be sent to India to examine into the grievances of the natives; that a proclamation should be issued declaring that the Queen would not sanction the violation of treaties, or the disturbance of property, and that she would respect the laws, customs, and usages of the natives of India. Mr. Disraeli's motion gave an opportunity of entering into as full a discussion of the Indian question as was desirable at a moment when the whole energies of the government should have been concentrated on the object of suppressing the revolt as speedily as possible. Having served this purpose, the motion was not pressed to a division; and an amendment brought forward by Lord J. Russell for an address to her Majesty, assuring her of the cordial support of the House in any measure that might be necessary for the suppression of the disturbances, was unanimously adopted.

It cannot, however, be denied that the government was chargeable with a very culpable disregard of the state of feeling that existed in India, and especially among the native troops. It might, indeed, be urged that the ignorance and indifference under which they laboured with regard to the most important concerns of our vast Indian empire, only too faithfully represented the still greater ignorance and still profounder indifference with which almost all parties in the legislature and the nation regarded the concerns of that vast empire which we had undertaken to govern; and

that if our rulers were careless and ill-informed, the Houses of Parliament and the people generally were still more careless and still more uninformed. All the debates relating to this, the largest and most valuable portion of our possessions, up to the time of which we are now writing, had been carried on in the most languid and indifferent manner, in thin Houses, and amidst manifold indications of the ignorance which prevailed on the subject, and the careless disregard, and even impatience, with which everything relating to India was received. It was indeed alleged, and alleged by some of the ministers themselves, that the mutiny was an occurrence which none could have foreseen, and against which, therefore, no provision could have been made. To show how far this was from being the case, we need only refer to a pamphlet published by Colonel Hodgson at Meerut, the very cradle of the mutiny, in 1851, that is, full six years before the revolt broke out. In that pamphlet the writer proved that the admission of the priestly caste of Brahmins into the ranks of our Indian army, in spite of the positive prohibitions limiting their employment, was the occasion of engendering and fomenting discord and sedition among the native troops; aggravated by the promotion of native officers, which, as he pointed out, failed to animate them to a more zealous and conscientious execution of their professional obligations to the state. "On all occasions of discontent and insubordinate caballing," wrote the colonel, "how very rare it is to see a native officer come forward in a firm and unequivocal manner to disclose what has come to his knowledge, and thereby to evince a becoming consciousness of the duty he owes to his own rank and to the government which conferred it. It would be the height of credulity to imagine the possibility of evil intention existing in the hues without his most entire cognition; and therefore, by failing in moral energy, he virtually becomes an accomplice, shrinking from the manly performance of his duty as a commissioned officer, which imperatively requires a prompt disclosure of such seditious designs. It is lamentable to know that, with his increased rank, he acquires not the slightest perception of his increased responsibility. He still remains in all his feelings and sentiments a common soldier, and seldom assumes the moral tone of a commissioned officer."

Nor was this the only warning which had been given. The late General Sir Charles Napier, whose high and deserved military reputation gave great weight to his representations, had again and again vainly complained of the inferior character of many of the English officers by whom the native regiments were commanded.

But the causes of this terrible revolt were not military only. There can be no doubt that, whether it arose from carelessness and folly, or from a studied intention to insult the religious prejudices of the Indian soldiery, the suspicions entertained by the Sepoys with regard to the greased cartridges were not altogether without foundation; and farther, that the efforts made—with the apparent sanction of the Indian government—to convert the natives to Christianity had produced a strong feeling among the Indian people, and especially among the Indian soldiers. The danger of these well-meant but often ill-judged attempts to proselytize had long before been pointed out by Sydney Smith.

But however much the Indian and English governments might be blamed for not having given their attention to the danger before the storm arose, they at all events showed no want of energy or activity in meeting it now that it had burst forth. We have seen the promptitude with which Sir Colin Campbell was despatched to the scene of action, and troops were sent after him; not, indeed, with sufficient speed to satisfy the impatience of the public, or silence the complaints of the press, but as rapidly as the suddenness of the emergency would allow. The French emperor evinced the sincerity of his desire to maintain a cordial understanding with our government, by offering a passage through France to our troops; an offer which, though not accepted by the government, entitled him to the grateful remembrance of the English people.

The Indian rebellion was certain to draw after it a very large measure of those internal evils which every great war produces; and the more so because the country had scarcely recovered from the effects of the Crimean war. There was much depression of trade and manufactures, and great derangement of our monetary system—so great, in fact, as to threaten the stability of the Bank of England itself, and to render it necessary to take extraordinary measures in order to enable it to meet the demands made on it. Ministers, having been appealed to by the governors of the Bank, and made acquainted with the critical position in which they were placed, resolved to authorize a temporary violation of the Bank Charter as settled by the act of 1844, and to summon parliament in order to obtain an indemnity. The announcement of this decision took the country by surprise, and the more so as parliament had a short time before been prorogued to a period which indicated an intention on the part of the government not to summon it for business before the usual time. The

session was opened on the 3rd of December, the Queen attending in person, and delivering a speech containing the following clause: "Your attention will be called to the laws which regulate the representation of the people in parliament, with a view to consider what amendments may be safely and beneficially made therein."

Seldom in the whole course of its history had the Bank been placed in a more critical position. The provisions of the Bank Charter Act restricting the issue of notes had been found inexecutable, and were therefore suspended. The authority for this suspension was communicated in a letter addressed by the First Lord of the Treasury to the governors of the Bank. The reason assigned was the failure of certain mercantile and trading establishments, and the consequent withdrawal from circulation of a large amount of paper-money. But the true motive for the relaxation was the condition to which the Bank itself was reduced, which was such that, without the liberty thus afforded, it would have been unable to meet the demands made upon it. On Wednesday, November 18th, when the accounts were made up, it appeared that there were in the Bank, notes and gold to the value of 1,462,153*l.*, while the deposits that might at any time be drawn out amounted to 18,248,003*l.* On the following day the liabilities of the Bank were upwards of 4,000,000*l.* more than they had been in the preceding July, while its available resources were more than 4,000,000*l.* less than they had been at that time. If, therefore, the act of 1844 had been strictly carried out, the Bank must have failed. Under these circumstances the government sanctioned the suspension of the act in this respect, and the Bank at once issued notes for 180,000*l.* more than the law permitted. This session lasted only eight days, and was terminated on the 11th of December by an adjournment to the 4th of February.

There were other events which render this year remarkable. While the great struggle was going on which was to determine whether India should be preserved or lost to England, the Social Science Association was being founded, the South Kensington Museum established, the noble reading-room of the British Museum inaugurated, the Art Treasures Exhibition held at Manchester, and the first Handel festival at the Crystal Palace. Great efforts were being made to convey the electric telegraph across the Atlantic, which, though not successful, encouraged the hope of future success. The Leviathan or Great Eastern, by far the most gigantic steam-ship ever constructed, was brought to a completion;

and, though the attempts to launch her had not as yet succeeded, there was no reason to doubt that she would in the course of the next few months be afloat. Mr. Macaulay was raised to the peerage, and Mr. Bright elected member for Birmingham, during his absence from England.

Parliament resumed its sittings on the day to which it had been adjourned. On the 12th of February the government introduced into the House of Commons a bill for the transfer of the government of India from the Company to the Crown; thus obeying the demands of public opinion, which required, especially since the recent rebellion, that an end should be put to the division of authority which had hitherto prevailed in the administration of that great possession. We will not enter into any examination of the details of the measure, for an unexpected catastrophe caused it to be withdrawn shortly after its introduction, under circumstances to which it is necessary that we should briefly refer.

On the 14th of January a most determined attempt was made to assassinate the French Emperor, as he was being driven to the opera with the Empress and General Rognet. Just as the carriage in which they were riding entered the Rue Lepelletier, a bomb was thrown at it, which instantly exploded and killed twenty persons, without injuring the carriage or its occupants. Almost immediately after, a second bomb was thrown, killing one of the horses, and consequently stopping the carriage. A third bomb burst immediately under the vehicle with a tremendous explosion; but, though the carriage itself was almost blown to pieces, its occupants escaped with very trifling injuries. A man, who at the moment of the last explosion rushed forward with a dagger and a revolver was seized by a *sergent de ville*, and apprehended after a violent struggle, in which his captor was wounded. Just before the attempt was made, a man named Picri, a refugee who had recently entered France with a forged passport, was recognized and apprehended with a bomb in his possession similar to those that had been employed in the murderous attempt. On the following morning Felix Orsini, who seems to have been the leader of this gang of assassins, was arrested. As these men had come from London, where they had made their preparations for this atrocious attempt, a great number of the French people were indignant that, after an alliance so close and so loyal, after the recent sympathy manifested towards England at the time of the outbreak of the Indian war, we should harbour such a crew of villains, and allow the murderous weapons they employed to be constructed, without taking steps to prevent

this infamous abuse of our hospitality. It was felt to be unjust that shelter should be afforded to the assassins of a friendly prince, which would not be afforded to the assassins of the meanest of his subjects. Accordingly, Count Walewski, the minister of foreign affairs at Paris, wrote to Count Persigny, the French ambassador at London, a letter, which expressed the feeling with which the harbouring of such criminals was regarded by the French government and people. "It is no longer," he wrote, "the hostility of misguided parties manifesting itself by all the excesses of the press, and every violence of language; it is no longer even the labour of factions seeking to agitate opinion and to provoke disorder; it is assassination reduced to a doctrine, preached openly, practised in repeated attempts, the most recent of which has struck Europe with stupefaction. Ought, then, the right of asylum to protect such a state of things? Is hospitality due to assassins? Shall English legislation serve to favour their designs and their manoeuvres? and can it continue to protect persons who place themselves by flagrant acts without the pale of the common law?" Representations in accordance with the instructions thus conveyed were made to the English government, and favourably received. Lord Palmerston and his colleagues resolved to bring into parliament a measure bearing on the subject, and on the 9th of February introduced a bill for the punishment of conspiracy to murder. Though its introduction was strongly opposed by Mr. Kinglake, leave to bring in the bill was carried by a majority of 299 to 99. The measure, however, was brought forward under circumstances calculated to prevent the bill from obtaining a calm and candid consideration. Addresses had been presented to the emperor from officers of the French army, some of them holding the rank of colonel, which, while congratulating him on his wonderful escape, spoke of the English people as the protectors of "assassins surpassing those who had gone before them in all that was odious;" and talked of "demanding an account of the land of impunity, which contains the haunts of the monsters who are sheltered by its laws. Give us the order, sire, and we will pursue them even to their strongholds." One address was couched in these terms: "Let the miserable assassins, the subordinate agents of such crimes, receive the chastisement due to their abominable attempts; but let also the infamous haunt in which machinations so infernal are planned be destroyed for ever."

This martial balderdash would probably have been treated in England with the contempt it deserved, if it had not unfortunately

been inserted in the *Moniteur*, the organ of the French government. It was thought the French were taking advantage of the critical position in which the Indian revolt had placed us, in order to coerce our government. The spirit of this country was thoroughly roused, and it was determined to meet menace with defiance. The measure brought in by Lord Palmerston was regarded as a concession to the bombastic threats of the French colonels; and many who at another time would have been disposed to support it, now refused to give it any consideration. In vain did Count Walewski explain that the publication had occurred through inadvertence, caused by the number of addresses presented. He could not allay the indignation that had been awakened. The claims which the French emperor had established on the friendly feeling of this country were forgotten, and there was a strong combination of parties to defeat the government measure. On the question of the introduction of the bill, Mr. Roebuck, Lord John Russell, Mr. Disraeli, and Mr. Monckton Milnes declared themselves against it. When the second reading was proposed, on the 19th of February, Mr. Milner Gibson moved: "That this House hears with much concern that it is alleged that the recent attempt on the life of the Emperor of the French has been devised in England, and expresses its detestation of such a wicked enterprise; and that while the House is ready at all times to assist in remedying any defects in the criminal law, which, after due investigation, are proved to exist, yet it cannot but regret that her Majesty's government, previously to inviting the House to amend the law of conspiracy at the present time, have not felt it their duty to make some reply to the important despatch received from the French government, dated Paris, January 22nd, 1858, and which has been laid before parliament." In the debate that followed, Mr. Gladstone joined the opponents of the government. When the House divided, the numbers were:—

For the amendment	...	..	..	...	...	234
Against	.	..	....	...	...	215
Majority against the government						19

Such was the answer the House of Commons gave, not so much to Lord Palmerston as to the foolish threats of the French colonels. Many of those who voted with the majority did not wish to overthrow the government; and, as the question was not a vital one, Lord Palmerston might have appealed to the House of Commons for a vote of confidence, which would probably have been

accorded to him, and the House, after having exhaled its ill-humour, might perhaps have permitted him to proceed with his bill, or to substitute for it another measure similar in character and equal in efficacy. But Lord Palmerston, who, though ambitious of office, never manifested undue tenacity in the retention of it, determined to follow the rigorously constitutional though less convenient course, and at once resigned, leaving the Indian Bill in the hands of a government which would probably not be able to command a majority in the House. Just before his resignation he received intelligence of the triumph of his Chinese policy, and of the capture of Canton by the British troops.

On the resignation of Lord Palmerston, Lord Derby was sent for by the Queen, and with some difficulty formed an administration.

On Monday, the 1st of March, parliament having reassembled after the adjournment which had been made in order to allow the new ministry time to make the necessary arrangements, Lord Derby explained the circumstances under which he had assumed the government of the country. He excused himself from entering into a full statement of the policy which he would endeavour to carry out, on account of the shortness of the time that had elapsed since he took office, and the late period of the session; but he referred to two questions which appeared to him specially to demand the attention of the government. The first of these was the question of the changes to be effected in the system of government, or rather the constitution of the home government, of India; the other was the question of parliamentary reform. On both these questions he expressed an opinion that it would have been better at present to have let them alone; but that, after the feeling that had been manifested with respect to them by the House of Commons, and after the manner in which the latter question had been referred to in several speeches from the throne, it would be his duty to try and effect a settlement of them.

As the preceding government had been thrown out of office because it had not sent an answer to the note of Count Walewski, one of the first duties that devolved on the new ministry was to send a reply. The result of the communications between the two governments was that, on the 12th of March, Mr. Disraeli was enabled to announce to the House of Commons that the unfortunate misunderstanding which had recently arisen between the two countries was entirely terminated in a manner alike friendly and honourable, and which would be as satisfactory to the feelings as it was conducive to the interests of the two countries.

On the 26th of March it fell to the lot of Mr. Disraeli, as leader of the House of Commons, to introduce the India Bill of the new government, known at the time as India Bill No. 2, in order to distinguish it from the bill that had previously been brought in by Lord Palmerston. This measure, like No. 1, never went beyond its first reading. A storm of ridicule and unpopularity arose against it, and it soon became evident that there was no chance of its passing. At this crisis, Lord J. Russell came forward and suggested that the House should deal with the question by way of resolution. Mr. Disraeli very cordially accepted Lord John Russell's proposal, and offered to allow him to move the resolutions. As this arrangement was strongly objected to, on the ground that it was incompatible with ministerial responsibility, Mr. Disraeli himself brought forward resolutions on which a third bill might be founded. But before they came under the consideration of the House, an incident occurred which had nearly occasioned the dissolution of the newly formed government. Lord Canning sent back the draft of a proclamation he proposed to issue, announcing a scheme of confiscation, open to very grave objection, and which would probably have caused the nearly extinguished flame of rebellion to burst forth again. Lord Ellenborough, the Indian minister, wrote a strongly worded protest, which ought to have been kept secret till it had reached its destination. However, the purport of the proposed proclamation and of Lord Ellenborough's strictures on it became known; and Lord Shaftesbury in the House of Lords, and Mr. Cardwell in the House of Commons, brought forward motions which were in fact censures on the ministry, and which, if carried, would probably have caused another change of government. This result was averted by the resignation of Lord Ellenborough. It was afterwards found that objections similar to those which had been made by Lord Ellenborough had been raised by Sir James Outram in India, and that the proclamation had been modified by Lord Canning in accordance with his representations. Lord Shaftesbury's motion had already been rejected by the Lords, and after a protracted debate, extending over four nights, Mr. Cardwell withdrew that which he had proposed, in deference to the wishes and opinions of several members who had previously intended to have supported it. The circumstances which accompanied this withdrawal were thus depicted by Mr. Disraeli, in an address delivered at Slough to the Conservative electors of Buckinghamshire, on the 26th of May, five days after the occurrence of the scene he described :—

“There is nothing like last Friday evening in the history of

the House of Commons. We came down to the House expecting to divide at four o'clock in the morning; I myself probably expecting to deliver an address two hours after midnight; and I believe that, even with the consciousness of a good cause, that is no mean effort. Well, gentlemen, we were all assembled; our benches with their serried ranks seemed to rival those of our proud opponents; when suddenly there arose a wail of distress, but not from us. I can only liken the scene to the mutiny of the Bengal army. Regiment after regiment, corps after corps, general after general, all acknowledged that they could not march through Coventry. It was like a convulsion of nature rather than an ordinary transaction of human life. I can only liken it to one of those earthquakes which take place in Calabria and Peru. There was a rumbling murmur, a groan, a shriek, a sound of distant thunder. No one knew whether it came from the top or the bottom of the House. There was a rent, a fissure in the ground, and then a village disappeared, then a tall tower toppled down, and the whole of the opposition benches became one great dissolving view of anarchy."

Perhaps a more splendid specimen of high art in word-painting of an extravagantly imaginative and decorative description, was never exhibited. It brings to the mind some of Martin's great pictures; only it has the advantage over them that motion has over rest, and the representation of the succession of events over the representation of their contemporaneous occurrence. The speech provoked more criticism perhaps than any address on a similar occasion. It was repeatedly referred to in both Houses; and Lord Derby, in defending and justifying it, thus alluded to the passage we have quoted from it: "I felt eminently convinced that, great as was the wit, great as was the clearness, great as was the humour of this most graphic description—that which most peculiarly appertained to it was its undeniable truth. There was no exaggeration even of colouring; for no exaggeration could be applied to that matchless scene at which—I shall remember it to the last day of my life—I had the good fortune to be present."

The passage which attracted so much attention was by no means the only portion of this clever and remarkable address that was subjected to adverse criticism. Two other statements it contained gave serious offence to the late ministry and their supporters, and were strongly controverted. In one of them Mr. Disraeli had applied to the late ministry the term "cabal," and in the other he had alleged that war with France was imminent when the late ministry quitted office. These allegations were indignantly denied by the members of the late government.

After all these discussions and interruptions, the House of Commons returned to the indispensable business of the consideration of the resolutions on which the India Bill No 3 was to be based. They were under the charge of Lord Stanley, and were subject to the especially severe criticism and animadversion of Lord J. Russell, at whose suggestion the plan of proceeding by resolution had been originally adopted. After long and careful deliberation, and much modification, the resolutions were at length agreed to, and embodied in a bill by which it was proposed that the government of India should be transferred from the Company to the Crown. A secretary of state for India was to be appointed, who was to be assisted by a council of fifteen, to hold office "during good behaviour." Eight members of this council were to be nominated by the crown, and seven, for the first time, by the board of directors, and afterwards by the council itself. One great feature of this measure was the introduction into it of the system of competitive examinations for the various civil offices, which had hitherto been in the patronage of the board of directors. This system had been advocated by Mr. Edwin Chadwick in the year 1827, in a paper on the administration of the medical charities in France. It was embodied in an act passed by Lord Glenelg and Mr. Macaulay in 1833, but the East Indian Company allowed it to remain dormant. It was re-enacted in Sir C. Wood's bill of 1853, and applied in a few instances, but being now urged by Mr. Mill, the government, which would probably have strenuously resisted such an attempt to interfere with its patronage in England, consented to a trial of the experiment in India. And thus a principle was fully inaugurated which was afterwards extended to branches of the home service, to which it seemed to be peculiarly applicable—the engineers and the artillery—with such success, that it will no doubt be employed in every branch of the public service to which it can be applied.

On the 1st of July in this year the long-standing controversy on the subject of the Jewish disabilities received its quietus by means of a compromise suggested by Lord Lucan, which was, that each House should have the power to modify, according to its pleasure, the form of oath to be administered to its members. A bill embodying this suggestion having been carried rapidly through its various stages, and the form of oath in the Lower House having been altered in such a way as to allow of its being taken by a Jew, it was administered to Baron Rothschild, who was then allowed, without farther opposition, to take his seat.

An almost tropical heat, and a pestilential stench from the Thames, which neither Black Rod nor Sergeant-at-Arms could keep out of the halls of parliament, made the members of both Houses more than usually anxious to hasten as quickly as possible into a purer atmosphere; and ministers were only too anxious to gratify this desire. But before the session closed, they very properly determined to abate the intolerable nuisance which had so unpleasantly forced itself on their notice. Accordingly, on Thursday, July the 15th, Mr. Disraeli moved for leave to bring in a bill for the main drainage of the metropolis; a work which it was calculated would cost at least 3,000,000*l.*; the money to be borrowed on the guarantee of the government, and repaid in forty years by a special rate of 3*l.* in the pound; the work to be completed in five years and a half. The expenditure of the money and the carrying out of the object of the bill were to be intrusted to the Metropolitan Board of Works. The bill went through its various stages with few alterations. On Monday, the 2nd of August, parliament was prorogued by commission; and on the following Wednesday the Queen and Prince Albert started from Portsmouth, attended by a large convoy, to meet the Emperor and Empress of the French at Cherbourg, and to assist at the fêtes held there on the occasion of the inauguration of the new Napoleon dock and a statue of the First Napoleon.

Thus the ministry of a minority had, under the deft and dextrous guidance of Mr. Disraeli, passed through the session, and their leader had cleverly managed to give to a great escape the semblance of a great victory. But it was not by any feats of legislative legerdemain, however skillful, that public support was to be obtained for a ministry which existed not so much on the sufferance as on the divisions of its opponents. There was a party led by Lord J. Russell; another led by Lord Palmerston; another consisting of the Peelites, as they were called, few in number, but formidable from their eloquence and their legislative and administrative capacity; and lastly, there was the party which had forced on a reluctant and protectionist legislature the adoption of a free-trade policy, and which, under the able leadership of Messrs. Cobden and Bright, would probably have attached to itself all the other sections of the Liberal Party, if those eminent men had not chosen to sacrifice power and popularity rather than yield to the warlike passions and prejudices of their fellow countrymen.

But the clever leaders of the Conservative party did not rely only on the divisions of their opponents. They were well aware

that, unless they could obtain public confidence and support, they could not long continue to retain their places; and they felt at once the necessity and the difficulty of putting forth a programme of their policy. Something must be done to conciliate public opinion; yet what change could be proposed that would not rouse the opposition of their extreme followers? They met this difficulty by talking about "Conservative progress;" a phrase too vague to cause alarm to the most decided reactionist, and yet holding out an expectation that the existence of a Conservative government would not altogether stop the march of improvement.

While the queen and the emperor were exchanging civilities at Cherbourg, the *Agamemnon* and *Niagara* had succeeded, in spite of most unfavourable weather, in depositing the electric cable at the bottom of the Atlantic. Great was the joy which the tidings of this scientific success caused in the two countries. But the signals became fainter and fainter, and at length ceased altogether. It was, however, alleged that the electric current went feebly and only for a short distance; and it was hoped that the failure had occurred in the shallow water near the Irish coast, and in a portion of the cable weaker than the rest, and which had been temporarily laid down, for the purpose of being afterwards replaced. This hope, however, was disappointed, and for the present this great experiment had failed.

The Chinese war was brought to a close towards the end of the year by a treaty, of which it was observed at the time that it was "highly satisfactory on paper." It was found on trial to be tolerably satisfactory in its practical working.

The Oxford middle-class examination, now known as the "University local examination," commenced at Oxford on the 21st of June; and the example thus set was followed by the University of Cambridge in December. The admission of girls to the university examinations was not obtained till 1865.

Before the end of the year 1858 a proclamation was issued announcing the transfer of the government of India from the Company to the Crown, in conformity with the provisions of the act which had been passed for that purpose; and very shortly after, the commander-in-chief of the Indian army, Sir Colin Campbell, who had been raised to the peerage by the title of Lord Clyde, was able officially to announce to the governor-general that the last vestiges of the rebellion had been trampled out, and that the last bands of the insurgents had been driven across the frontiers of our possessions into the kingdom of Nepaul.

The desire for parliamentary reform had never ceased to exist; but the attention of the legislature and the country had been engrossed by the Great Exhibition, the Crimean, Chinese, Persian, and Indian wars, and other events of less importance, and the consideration of this question had, with general consent, been postponed to a more convenient season. Now, however, the state of parties favoured the revival of its agitation; and towards the close of this year several large and important meetings were held for the purpose of manifesting the feeling. In this agitation Mr. Bright took the lead. He had recovered from the very serious illness under which he had been suffering, and which for nearly two years had prevented him from transacting any kind of business. He attended large and important meetings at Birmingham, Manchester, and Glasgow, and reluctantly consented to prepare a measure conferring the borough franchise on all persons rated to the relief of the poor, and on all lodgers who paid a rent of ten pounds, reducing the franchise in the counties to a ten-pound rental, laying the expenses of the returning-officer on the county or borough rate, prescribing that votes should be taken by ballot, wholly disfranchising eighty-six boroughs, taking away one member from thirty-four other boroughs, and transferring the seats thus obtained to the larger towns, counties, and county divisions. The measure was one that very happily and exactly met the wishes of earnest reformers throughout the country, and obtained a very decided support from them. A strong feeling in favour of such a reform existed at this time, and not only were Lord J. Russell and Lord Palmerston prepared to deal with the question, but Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli, knowing as they did the perils they would have to encounter not only from their political opponents, but also, and perhaps even more formidably, from the more extreme section of their political supporters, felt that the only course open to them was that of boldly braving these dangers, and staking the existence of their government on the success of a measure for the reform of parliament.

CHAPTER XV.

THE FRENCH TREATY.

BEFORE parliament reassembled, Messrs. Walpole and Henley, two of the most eminent members of the Conservative government had retired from it, on the ground of their disapproval of the reform bill which the majority of their colleagues had determined to introduce. This defection was the more damaging because they were men of very high integrity, entertaining opinions with regard to the question shared by that large portion of the Conservative party which viewed all reform with jealousy, and only acquiesced in the introduction of a measure on the subject by their own party as a means of preventing a still stronger measure from being carried by the party opposed to them. However, notwithstanding this ominous loss, the government determined to meet parliament, and to lay before it the measure which had been carefully prepared during the recess.

The session was opened on Thursday, the 3rd of February. The speech from the throne recommended the reconstruction of the navy; a point on which it was noticed that her Majesty, in reading the speech, dwelt with marked emphasis; and it was expected from the terms employed that a very large demand would be made for the purpose. It was, therefore, an agreeable surprise to the legislature and the nation when it subsequently turned out that Sir J. Pakington asked no more than 1,000,000*l.* for the performance of the operation which had been announced. This sum seemed to show that the required reconstruction was not very extensive.

The ministerial Reform Bill proposed to give a vote in boroughs to persons who had property to the amount of 10*l.* a year in the funds, bank stock, or East India stock; to persons having 60*l.* in a savins' bank; to the recipients of pensions in the naval, military,

and civil services amounting to 20*l.* a year; to the inhabitants of a portion of any house whose aggregate rent was 20*l.* per annum; to graduates, ministers of religion, members of the legal and medical professions, and, under certain defined circumstances, to schoolmasters. It proposed to extend the 10*l.* household franchise to the counties; an arrangement which it was calculated would add two hundred thousand to the number of the county electors. The bill was allowed to be brought in without opposition, but very strong objections were entertained against it by men of all parties in the House. The problem which its framers had sought to solve appears to have been how to increase the number of voters throughout the kingdom in such a way as to secure the return of a Conservative majority. But the majority of the Conservative party seriously doubted whether the proposed end would be attained by the measure. The interval that elapsed between the first and the second reading of the bill by no means improved its prospects or strengthened the position of the government. However, the greater part of the Conservative party, though not without much murmuring and dissatisfaction, followed their leaders. The question of the second reading was brought forward by Mr. Disraeli on the 21st of March, when Lord John Russell proposed the following amendment: "That it is neither just nor politic to interfere in the manner proposed in the government bill with the freehold franchise as hitherto exercised in the counties of England and Wales; and that no readjustment of the franchise will satisfy the House or the country which does not provide for a greater extension of the suffrage in cities and boroughs than is contemplated in the present measure." The debate extended over nearly two weeks, at the close of which a division took place, when the numbers were:—

For Lord J. Russell's amendment	...	...	...	330
Against	...	...	...	291
Majority against the government				39

Thus the almost unequalled number of 621 members voted on this division. Ministers had only two courses which, under the circumstances, they could take without dishonour—they must either resign or dissolve. They chose the latter alternative.

Parliament was prorogued on the 19th of April, and dissolved on the following day. Before the commencement of the elections, it was known that war had broken out between France and Sardinia on the one hand, and Austria on the other. This event afforded the

Conservative candidates an opportunity of descanting on the danger of a change of ministry at such a moment; and on the other hand caused Lord J. Russell and the opposition candidates generally to urge that a government which would be listened to with deference abroad ought to have strength and stability at home; but that the present administration had exhibited itself to Europe at the outset of an approaching congress as having an irreconcilable difference with parliament, of whose assistance it had deprived itself during what might be a critical period of the negotiation. The announcement of the war produced a panic on the stock-exchange, drawing after it several heavy failures: but confidence was restored as soon as it became known that the English government had determined to abstain from all intervention in the contest. There can be no doubt, however, that so far as the war influenced the elections at all, it told, on the whole, against the government, because the sympathies of the majority of the English people were strongly in favour of the liberation of Italy from Austrian oppression; and it was generally believed that, while the sympathies of the Conservative party and government were with Austria, the influence of a Liberal government would be thrown into the scale of Italy.

The result of this appeal to the country was, that about 302 Conservatives and 350 Liberals were returned to the new parliament. When the address in answer to the speech from the throne was brought forward, the Marquis of Hartington moved an addition to it, which was, virtually, a vote of want of confidence in ministers. The debate on this motion was carried on with great vivacity during three nights, and concluded on the night of the 10th of June, when on a division the numbers were:—

For the amendment	...	...	...	...	...	323
Against	...	...	...	...	...	310
Majority against the government						13

The defeat of the ministry was immediately followed by its resignation. It was already known that Lord J. Russell and Lord Palmerston, who headed two different sections of the Liberal party, had been reconciled, and had agreed to act together; but speculation was still rife as to which of them would hold the first place in the new ministry, when it was announced that Lord Granville had been sent for by her Majesty, on the afternoon of the 11th of June; and on the morning of the 13th a detailed account of

the conversation which had taken place on the occasion appeared in the *Times* newspaper.

A few days after, in officially announcing his resignation in the House of Lords, the Earl of Derby expressed a not unnatural surprise that a conversation of so confidential a character should have appeared in the *Times*. Earl Granville explained that he had obtained permission from her Majesty to state to his political friends the result of what had occurred; but it was never intended that it should be communicated to any newspaper. At the same time he could not see that any injury had resulted from the publication, seeing that her Majesty appeared therein as desirous as ever of walking in the spirit of the constitution. Lord Palmerston agreed to the proposed arrangement, but Lord John Russell would not consent to take office under Lord Granville, expressing, however, his willingness to serve under Lord Palmerston. This refusal rendered it impossible for Lord Granville to form a ministry that would be likely to command a majority in the House of Commons. Lord Palmerston was then sent for by the Queen, and undertook the formation of a ministry, of which the Lord Chancellor was Lord Campbell; the Lord President of Council, Earl Granville; the Lord Privy Seal, Duke of Argyll; the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone; the Home Secretary, Sir G. C. Lewis; the Foreign Secretary, Lord J. Russell; the Colonial Secretary, Duke of Newcastle; the War Secretary, the Right Hon. Sidney Herbert; and the Indian Secretary, Sir C. Wood.

The name of the president of the Board of Trade did not appear in the list of the new ministry; and the reason of the omission was, that Mr. Cobden, then on his way back from America, had in his absence been elected member for Rochdale, and that Lord Palmerston had determined to offer him that office. Accordingly, on his arrival he was informed of his election for the borough of Rochdale, and received Lord Palmerston's offer of office. To Mr. Cobden this offer was very tempting. The salary of the office would at that time have been an object of consequence to him, and, as he afterwards said, the office was one in which he felt that he would have been "a square peg in a square hole." He nevertheless refused it. He strongly disapproved the policy of Lord Palmerston, and especially his foreign policy; he was decidedly opposed to the large military expenditure which he knew that the prime minister deemed to be absolutely necessary. The post which he refused was accepted by his friend, Mr. Milner

Gibson, who generally acted with him, and whose opinions on almost all the great questions of the day were nearly identical with his own. Another gentleman whose accession to the ministry gave it great strength and stability, and whose presence in it was perhaps necessary to its existence, and certainly to its permanence, was Mr. Gladstone. He had to face another strong contest for his seat for the University of Oxford, but his friends succeeded in obtaining his re-election by a larger majority than on the last occasion, notwithstanding the opposition of many members of the University who had formerly given him their support, but who were becoming intolerant of the more and more pronounced liberality of his views.

Thus in the brief period which intervened between June, 1846, and July, 1859, there had been no fewer than six changes of ministry, each attended with all the evils inseparable from such changes; the interruption of the public and private business of parliament, alteration in the domestic and foreign policy of the government as a whole, and in the direction of its several departments.

While the political changes we have related were being made in England, the Austrians, after having suffered a rapid succession of defeats, had been driven out of Northern Italy, by the combined forces of the French and Sardinians, into the quadrilateral of fortresses, from which it would have been a matter of great difficulty to dislodge them; and Prussia showed signs of preparing to interfere on behalf of Austria. Under these circumstances, the Emperors of France and Austria met at Villafranca, and concluded an armistice which was followed by a treaty of peace. An intention to annex Savoy and Nico to France was reported to be entertained, was protested against by the English government, disavowed by Count Walewski on behalf of France, but shortly after effected.

Mr. Gladstone's budget was introduced on the 18th of July. He had to provide for a large addition to our naval and military establishments, in consequence of which it was expected that while the revenue for the coming year would be 64,340,000*l.*, the expenditure would be 69,207,000*l.* Mr. Gladstone did not attempt to make up this deficiency by a loan, or by any of the expedients usually adopted by chancellors of the exchequer for putting off the evil day, but by an addition of 4*d.* in the pound to the tax on incomes of above 150*l.*, a penny stamp on bankers' cheques drawn across the counter, and the diminution of the malt credits from eighteen to twelve weeks; thus adding to the accounts of the present year a duty which otherwise would not have been available till the year following.

A Financial-reform Association had been formed at Liverpool, whose plans were ably and lucidly expounded by Mr. Bright, in a speech delivered on the 1st of December, 1859, at a meeting arranged by the association, and which may be regarded as an exposition of their views.

He proposed the repeal of those taxes which fall on the bulk of the community, and on persons with precarious incomes, and the substitution for them of taxes on property producing a fixed income, the repeal of the income tax, the assessed taxes (except the house tax), the tax on marine assurances, the tax on fire insurances, and the excise duty on paper. He farther proposed to strike off every duty from the customs' tariff excepting those on foreign wines (which he would reduce from five shillings and sixpence to one shilling on the gallon), foreign spirits, and tobacco. He calculated that these remissions would reduce the revenue by upwards of 26,000,000*l.* He proposed to cover this deficiency by a tax of 8*s.* per cent. on the income of all persons whose property was above 100*l.*, which, according to his estimate, based on parliamentary returns, would yield a revenue of about 27,000,000*l.*

These recommendations attracted at the time a large share of public attention, and would probably have led to some important changes if there had not arisen about the same time one of those invasion panics which have periodically afflicted this country, encouraged by the prime minister himself, and aggravated by the intemperate boasts and menaces of French officers and journalists. One consequence of the alarm thus created was the formation of rifle corps throughout the country, intended to assist in its defence, in the very improbable contingency of an invasion. These corps have survived the alarms that gave birth to them; and by allowing the reduction in the number of our regular army have enabled the government to diminish our military expenditure more than the opinion of the public and the legislature would otherwise have permitted.

During the vacation the government first adopted the plan of publishing diplomatic documents in the *Gazette*, without waiting for the authority of parliament. Thus the desire naturally felt by the people to be made acquainted with the progress of foreign affairs was gratified during the recess as well as during the session of parliament.

The year 1859 came to a close amidst unmistakable tokens of reviving prosperity. The customs, the excise, the assessed taxes, and the post-office, yielded a revenue which surpassed that of any

previous year by 2,023,000*l*. Trade and commerce were flourishing in all their branches; pauperism was much diminished; employment was plentiful, and wages high; the funds high and steady; and money abundant. A shadow of gloom was cast on this extraordinary prosperity by the sudden death of our wonderfully accomplished historian, Lord Macaulay, leaving his *chef-d'œuvre* still uncompleted. As long as the English language shall be spoken, the works of Macaulay, and especially his *History of England*, will be read with delight, and all that relates to their author regarded with interest. Like most of our great writers, the groundwork of his excellence was laid in the careful and continual perusal of our beautiful translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, with which in his earlier years his mind was saturated through the care of his father, a man of deeply religious character. To this was superadded a diligent study of the writers of antiquity, particularly the great Greek dramatists, *Æschylus*, *Sophocles*, and *Euripides*: and also the writings of the Christian Fathers—writings which, at that period at least, were seldom read except by the professional students of theology. His career at the University of Cambridge was one of great distinction. His father's wealth rendered it unnecessary that he should devote himself to any profession. He was called to the bar in 1826, but does not appear to have ever intended to follow the law as a profession. At this time he formed a connection with the *Edinburgh Review*—then in the zenith of its reputation—which continued throughout the greater part of the remainder of his life. If he was distinguished as a man of genius, he was no less remarkable for the careful manner in which he unfolded and scrutinized the dusty worm-eaten records of parliament, or the stained and tattered ballads of a distant age. Nothing was too high for his genius, nothing too difficult for his industry, nothing too low and humble for his investigation. A great poet, a great philosopher, a great historian, and a great antiquary, he possessed excellence in each of these walks sufficient to build up a lasting reputation; but he possessed all these in combination, and united with them a splendour of genius quite peculiar to himself. He was great also as a politician and a debater. His published speeches, though inferior to his written works, have an excellence which has very rarely been surpassed, even in the annals of British eloquence. In the year 1857 he was raised to the peerage, on which the lustre of his genius conferred much more distinction than he could receive from it.

Macaulay was strongly attached to Whig principles; and if there is any blemish in his History, it has arisen from this feeling. He idealized the principles of the Whigs: and though, taken as a whole, his work is as remarkable for its accuracy and impartiality as it is for the genius that irradiates it, yet his Whig bias has sometimes led him to do more than justice to those whose political conduct he approved, and less than justice to those who were of the adverse party. But if he were thus biased, it was in spite of his own earnest endeavour to state truly the motives and the characters of the men whose lives and actions he desired to narrate with conscientious fidelity.

Those who knew him best were the most enthusiastic in their admiration of his private character. A friend who was himself a writer of no mean power thus speaks of him:—

“He was ever ready to assist with his counsel and fortune those who were struggling in the humbler walks of literary toil; and if we were at liberty to follow him into the narrower circle which bounded his domestic ties, it would be seen that no man ever lived of a more tender and affectionate nature. Many are they who at this hour feel as we do, that they have lost one of the kindest as well as one of the greatest of their friends; and although the applause and veneration of the world does in one sense perpetuate the existence of so illustrious a writer, we cannot forget that the virtues and the graces we loved in his life and conversation have vanished for ever.”

This year witnessed the death of another historian of a very high and extraordinary merit. But Mr. Hallam had survived for some time his powerful intellect, while that of Macaulay appeared to be unimpaired almost to his last moment.

The prosperity that marked the close of the year 1859 and the commencement of 1860 was not calculated to promote the agitation in favour of reform. But if the demand for it was less eager, the dread of it was less violent. The question was regarded in a spirit of calmness and moderation, which seemed to promise a speedy and satisfactory settlement. Mr. Bright, having been consulted, was ready to accept a plan prepared by Lord John Russell; and Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli, after seeing the result of the last elections, were willing to concede as much as Lord John Russell asked for. When, therefore, it was intimated in the queen's speech that an attempt would be made to place the national representation on a broader and firmer basis, it seemed that the time had come when a question, recommended to the attention of parliament in so

many royal speeches, and the subject of so many abortive bills, would at length be discussed in a calm and business-like spirit, and that a practical and moderate measure would be carried with the acquiescence of all parties.

This hopeful state of things was farther improved by the knowledge that Mr. Cobden was engaged as the plenipotentiary of the English government in negotiating a commercial treaty with France, based on free-trade principles, calculated to give an enormous impulse to the trade between the two countries, and to unite them by ties that would render a war between them almost impossible. With Mr. Gladstone as the chief finance-minister of the country, and Mr. Cobden as the negotiator of the treaty, both acting together with the most cordial unanimity, the strongest confidence was felt that it would prove highly advantageous to this country : and this confidence was strengthened by the fact that the emperor had warmly embraced the principles of free-trade, and was determined to use the power which his position gave him to overcome the strong opposition which the attempt to apply them in France was sure to encounter. The treaty was signed on the 23rd of January, and was soon after laid before the two Houses.

Such were the favourable auspices under which the session of 1860 commenced. It was opened by the queen in person, with a ceremonial far more brilliant and an attendance more numerous and enthusiastic than had been witnessed for many years. Ministers evinced their desire to carry forward the business of the session as speedily as possible by fixing its beginning for the 24th of January, ten days earlier than the usual time, by announcing that the financial statement would be made on the 6th of February, and the Reform Bill brought forward on the 20th.

The budget was postponed from the day originally fixed for its introduction, on account of the indisposition of the chancellor of the exchequer ; but on the 10th of February he was sufficiently recovered to be able to introduce it. Great as had been the interest with which his former statements had been received, this one excited higher expectations, and was listened to with a still more breathless attention.

It was, indeed, a speech of much historical value ; and it so fully and clearly describes the great changes which affected beneficially not this country only, but France, and, we may say, the whole world, that we cannot better carry forward our narrative of events than by quoting largely from it. In the midst of the anxious expectation and deep interest which prevailed, Mr. Glad-

stone rose. In the course of his address he thus explained the leading features of the French treaty:—

“Perhaps, sir, as the committee has not yet had an opportunity of reading the instrument itself, it may be convenient that I should in the first place state to them very briefly its principal covenants. First, I will take the engagements of France. France engages to reduce the duty on English coal and coke, from the 1st of July, 1860; on bar and pig iron and steel, from the 1st of October, 1860; on tools and machinery, from the 1st of December, 1860; and on yarns and goods in flax and hemp, including, I believe, jute—this last an article comparatively new in commerce, but one in which a great and very just interest is felt in some great trading districts,—from the 1st of June, 1861. That is the first important engagement into which France enters. Her second and greater engagement is postponed to the 1st of October, 1861. I think it is probably in the knowledge of the committee that this postponement is stipulated under a pledge given by the government of France to the classes who there, as here, have supposed themselves to be interested in the maintenance of prohibition. On the 1st of October, then, in the year 1861, France engages to reduce the duties and to take away the prohibitions on all the articles of British production mentioned in a certain list, in such a manner that no duty upon any one of those articles shall thereafter exceed thirty per cent. *ad valorem*. I do not speak of articles of food, which do not materially enter into the treaty; but the list to which I refer, sir, includes all the staples of British manufacture, whether of yarns, flax, hemp, hair, wool, silk, or cotton—all manufactures of skins, leather, bark, wood; iron and all other metals; glass, stoneware, earthenware, or porcelain. I will not go through the whole list; it is indeed needless, for I am not aware of any great or material article that is omitted. France also engages to commute those *ad valorem* duties into rated duties by a separate convention, to be framed for the purposes of giving effect to the terms I have described. But if there should be a disagreement as to the terms on which they should be rated under the convention, then the *maximum* chargeable on every class at thirty per cent. *ad valorem* will be levied at the proper period, not in the form of a rated duty, but upon the value; and the value will be determined by the process now in use in the English customs.

“I come next, sir, to the English covenants. England engages, with a limited power of exception, which we propose to exercise only with regard to two or three articles, to abolish immediately

and totally all duties upon all manufactured goods. There will be a sweep, summary, entire, and absolute, of what are known as manufactured goods from the face of the British tariff. Farther, England engages to reduce the duty on brandy, from 15s. the gallon to the level of the colonial duty, viz., 8s. 2d. per gallon. She engages to reduce immediately the duty on foreign wine. In the treaty it is of course French wine which is specified; but it is perfectly understood between France and ourselves, that we proceed with regard to the commodities of all countries alike. England engages, then, to reduce the duty on wine, from a rate nearly reaching 5s. 10d. per gallon, to 3s. per gallon. She engages, besides a present reduction, farther to reduce that duty from the 1st of April, 1861, to a scale which has reference to the strength of the wine measured by the quantity of spirit it contains."

Our space will not allow us to follow Mr. Gladstone into the details of his explanation. Suffice it to say that he anticipated a probable net loss of revenue for 1860-61 of 2,108,000*l.*; a sum which would nearly correspond with the amount of relief which would be obtained by the falling-in of the long annuities.

One great effort was made by the opposition to prevent, or delay, the adoption of the treaty. On the motion being made for going into committee on the plan, Mr. Disraeli, having first induced Mr. Du Cane to postpone a motion of which he had given notice, moved "that this House does not think fit to go into committee on the Customs Act with a view to the reduction or repeal of the duties referred to in the treaty of commerce between her Majesty and the Emperor of the French, until it shall have considered and assented to the engagements in that treaty." This motion was rejected by a majority of sixty-three. The repeal of the paper duty, which formed a very important part of the financial plan of the chancellor of the exchequer, and which was intended to effect a farther reduction of the cost of newspapers, was opposed by Mr. Miles, but carried against him by a majority of fifty-three.

Lord J. Russell introduced his Representation of the People Bill, on Thursday, March 1st. The simplicity of this measure presented a striking contrast to the complexity of that brought forward by the last government. It proposed to introduce a 10*l.* occupation franchise for the counties, and to reduce the borough franchise to 6*l.* The law with regard to rating was to remain unchanged, but the payment of poor-rates only, and not as heretofore of assessed taxes also, was to be made a condition of the vote. The bill farther proposed to take one member from each of twenty-five boroughs

which returned two; to give to the West Riding two additional seats, to the southern division of Lancashire two, and to each of the following counties or county divisions one—North Lancashire, Middlesex, West Kent, South Devon, South Stafford, North Riding, the parts of Lindsay, South Essex, East Somerset, West Norfolk, West Cornwall, and North Essex; it proposed that Kensington and Chelsea should form a borough with two members; that Birkenhead, Stalybridge, and Barnsley should each have one member; and that Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, and Leeds should each return one additional member. In places where there were three members, it proposed that the third member should represent the minority. Lord John also proposed to give a member to the University of London.

The plan thus announced was very apathetically received both in the country and in the House of Commons. When Lord J. Russell asked leave to bring in the bill the House was respectably filled, but by no means crowded. His exposition of his plan was listened to with a decorous calmness almost amounting to indifference.

Mr. Cardwell followed, and in proposing an Irish Reform Bill, spoke just ten minutes; and the Lord Advocate a quarter of an hour in introducing a Scotch Reform Bill. A few remarks were made, and leave was given to bring in the bill, which was ordered to be read a second time on the 19th of March. Equal indifference was shown when the question of the second reading was brought forward. The debate was opened by Mr. Disraeli, who described the bill as "a measure of a mediæval character, without the inspiration of the feudal system or the genius of the middle ages." The debate on the second reading was long and languid, and when it should have been continued the House was counted out. The bill, too, was ingeniously played off against the budget, and the budget against the bill; so the debate went on at intervals, before and after the Easter vacation, till the 3rd of May, when it was read a second time without a division; having been delayed partly by want of earnestness on the part of the supporters of the government, and partly by the opportunity which their lukewarmness afforded the opposition of retarding its progress. Thus the Conservatives, who had at first supposed that the bill could not be successfully resisted, were delighted at the hope now afforded them of being able at once to get rid of a measure which they disliked, and to damage the ministry under whose auspices it had been introduced. These tactics were soon exhibited by the number of notices given of

amendments in committee, evidently intended to delay the progress of the measure. Lord J. Russell, who was thoroughly in earnest with regard to his bill, endeavoured to conciliate some of the more moderate opponents of the measure by a promise of large concessions. Meanwhile, Mr. Massey, the member for Salford, had given notice that it was his intention to move that the bill should be referred to a select committee. The indifference manifested by the legislature as a whole was shared by many of the cabinet, and certainly by the premier, who was far enough from holding the resolute language regarding it which he had held two years before, when the divorce bill was under the consideration of the House. His feeling regarding it is well illustrated by an anecdote furnished to the author of this work by one of his colleagues. Conversing with a friend who maintained that the representatives sent to a reformed parliament would be men of the same standing and character with those who sat in the present parliament: "Yes," replied the premier, "I dare say the actors will be the same, but they will play to the galleries instead of to the boxes." Lord Palmerston's feeling on the question was so well understood by the Conservatives, that Lord Derby hinted that if Lord Palmerston would remove Lord J. Russell, Mr. Gladstone, and Mr. Milner Gibson from the cabinet, he would be prepared to support the government; and it is probable that the desperate efforts made to defeat the paper duty were inspired by the hope of forming a ministry composed of Conservative-Liberals and Liberal-Conservatives, two sections that were certainly much nearer to one another in sentiment and opinion than the men who sat round the council-board of Lord Palmerston's cabinet. There is no reason, however, to suppose that Lord Palmerston lent an ear to these overtures. Whatever his other faults, he was not the man to throw his colleagues in the ministry overboard, even though on some points of public policy he differed from them widely. But it is certain that he regarded the Reform Bill with an indifference bordering on aversion. Mr. Massey, whose motion was intended to shelve the bill, was a confidential adherent, and Mr. Mackinnon, who was the immediate occasion of the defeat of the measure, always considered that he had thereby rendered Lord Palmerston a very acceptable service. The premier, too, who was remarkable for the steadfastness with which on almost all occasions he kept his place in the House whenever any subject in which the government was concerned was under discussion, was almost invariably absent from the debates on the Reform Bill, and significantly silent when

present. Thus, what with the obstructive policy of the opposition and of many professed members of the Liberal party, and what with the half-hearted support that many of the followers of the government and even many of the ministry themselves, not excepting the head of the administration, gave to it, there was little hope of being able to push the bill through the House of Commons in the course of this session.

Monday, the 4th of June, was the day on which it had been fixed that the House of Commons should go into committee on the bill. Mr. Mackinnon then moved that the House should not proceed farther with the consideration of it until it was placed in possession of the census of 1861; a motion which, if carried, would have the effect of postponing the measure for three years. Mr. Mackinnon, had, as we have already seen, proposed a similar motion with regard to the Reform Bill of 1831, and had obtained a larger number of supporters for it than was procured for any other motion that was resisted by the government, and he eventually succeeded in carrying his point, the census of 1831 being made by the government the basis of the act of 1832. His long standing in the House, his personal popularity, but, above all, the desire that was felt by a majority of the members to avail themselves of a specious pretext for getting rid of the question, brought together an unusually large number of members, and when Mr. Mackinnon rose to propose his motion the House was crowded in all parts; and, as it was very generally believed that the government was likely to be defeated, the scene was like that which accompanied the explanation of a great measure by the leader of the government, or the introduction of a budget by Mr. Gladstone. Mr. Mackinnon, who, though a very old member of the House, rarely addressed it, was, as may well be imagined, somewhat unnerved when he found himself the centre of so much interest and excitement, and he commenced his address, amidst the breathless silence of the crowded and excited assembly, in a manner that showed he was not a little daunted by the great and unwonted interest his motion had awakened. However, stimulated by the cheers which greeted almost every sentence he uttered, he soon recovered his self-possession, and, gathering courage as he went on, he made a long and very telling speech. The opposition leaders saw the effect that had been produced, but they were not that evening sufficiently strong in numbers to take advantage of it. Members were therefore put up to speak against time, and the debate was adjourned with a very prevalent belief that the motion

would be carried. Accordingly, on the following Monday, there were great preparations for a division, and a general expectation that it would be fatal to the measure. Ministers, however, determined to decline a contest which had no longer an object. The bill was therefore withdrawn.

On Monday, the 21st of May, the Paper Duties Bill came before the House of Lords for the second reading, and it was rumoured that a great attempt would be made to throw it out. The consequence was, that the approaches to that House were crowded, and the same kind of interest manifested as when some highly-important measure was under consideration. As the bill involved a remission of taxation, the attempt to reject it raised a great constitutional question. It was admitted that the Lords had no right to amend a money bill so as to change the amount or incidence of taxation in the smallest particular; but when the question of the second reading had been brought before the House of Lords by Lord Granville, Lord Lyndhurst, who on that day had reached his eighty-eighth year, stood up, and speaking with all the eloquence and all the acuteness which had made him a man of mark some fifty or sixty years before, contended that the House of Lords possessed the right to reject a money bill. He produced several venerable and mouldy documents, which showed beyond dispute the fact that the Peers had in past ages exercised this right, and he asked the pertinent question, "If we have not this right, what is the use of our discussing money bills at all?" This was unanswerable, so far as the question of abstract right was concerned; but the real question was, Is it wise to attempt to revive a dormant privilege which clearly trenches on the supremacy of the representatives of the people in regard to all matters of taxation, and the exercise of which is certain to lead to its withdrawal, under circumstances calculated to weaken the authority of the House of Lords and lower its reputation?

The opposition to the bill, led by Lord Monteagle, formerly Mr. Spring Rice and Whig chancellor of the exchequer, was warmly supported by Lord Derby and Lord Chelmsford. On the other hand, Lord Cranworth, the lord chancellor, urged that the course proposed to be taken, if not, strictly speaking, unconstitutional, was so thinly separated from it, that to ordinary minds the distinction would be unintelligible. He pointed out that in no instance since the Revolution of 1688 had such a step as the rejection of a bill passed by the House of Commons for the repeal of a tax been taken by the peers; and he contended that the

precedents quoted by Lord Lyndhurst were peculiar in their circumstances and exceptional in their nature.

When the House divided the numbers were:—

Contents present	..	...	...	...	...	90	
Proxies	.	...	...	..	...	14	104
Non-contents present		...	...	...	...	161	
Proxies	..	...	...	...	...	32	193
Majority against the bill						...	89

Thus a tax, which a majority of the representatives of the people had determined to remit, was continued by the authority of the House of Lords. The constitutional question raised was evidently of the gravest importance, and it was expected that the government, whose measure had been defeated and whose financial plans had been deranged, would take the matter up warmly, and that a collision between the two Houses would follow, or a ministerial crisis would be announced; and there was all that crowding of the House and of its approaches which such an expectation usually produces; but Lord Palmerston, on moving the adjournment of the House over the 23rd, the Derby-day, contented himself with giving a simple notice that he should on Thursday, the 24th, move for the appointment of a select committee to examine the journals of the House of Lords for precedents with reference to the course which had been adopted by that House with regard to the bill for the repeal of the paper duties, and disclaimed, on the part of the government, any intention of taking steps which might bring the two Houses into collision. On the following Thursday the motion for the committee was made. It was a mere matter of form. The gentlemen nominated never left their seats, and their report, couched in bad English and worse Latin, was read at the bar of the House. It contained nothing which had not already been made known by the newspapers to everybody both in and out of the House. The real discussion of what had taken place was reserved for a future day, and it was still generally expected, notwithstanding the characteristic coolness with which the premier treated the matter, that some very decided course would be taken by the government; but the arrival of the Whitsun holidays delayed the consideration of the matter until Thursday, July the 5th, when a great number of petitions were presented, praying the House to maintain its right of dealing exclusively with all measures of taxation. Mr. Collier had given notice of a strongly worded motion

on the privilege question, and Mr. T. Duncombe of a resolution even more strongly worded. Both made way for Lord Palmerston, who moved the three following resolutions :—

“1. That the right of granting aids and supplies to the crown is in the Commons alone, as an essential part of their constitution; and the limitation of all such grants, as to matter, manner, measure, and time, is only in them.

“2. That although the Lords have exercised the power of rejecting bills of several descriptions relating to taxation by negating the whole, yet the exercise of that power by them has not been frequent, and is justly regarded by this House with peculiar jealousy, as affecting the rights of the Commons to grant the supplies.

“3. That to guard for the future against any undue exercise of that power by the Lords, and to secure to the Commons their rightful control over taxation and supply, this House has in its own hands the power so to impose and remit taxes, and to frame bills of supply, that the right of the Commons as to the matter, manner, measure, and time may be maintained inviolate.”

These resolutions were received with some disappointment. They touched the question at issue between the two Houses very lightly; they acknowledged the constitutional right of the peers to do as they had done, and pronounced a very feeble censure on the use which on this occasion the peers had made of their power. But if the resolutions were moderate, the speech in which Lord Palmerston introduced them was still more so. He admitted the importance of maintaining the privileges of the House, and declared that any attempt at aggression on them by the peers would be most dangerous, and ought to be strenuously resisted. He defended the conduct of the Lords in rejecting the Paper Duties Bill on the ground of the smallness of the majorities by which the second and third readings had been carried in the House of Commons; and spoke of that bill in almost disparaging terms. He was therefore of opinion that nothing had occurred to cause a collision between the two Houses, and he adjured honourable members not to adopt any course which would bring on a conflict. This speech was delivered with more energy and passion than he usually displayed, and was received with significant silence by the ministerialists, but with loud cheers by the Conservatives. Mr. Collier, Mr. Conyngham, Mr. V. Scully, Mr. Leatham, Mr. B. Osborne, and Mr. James, all members of the Liberal party, protested more or less strongly against the course adopted by the government.

Mr. Gladstone's opinion was naturally looked for with anxiety and curiosity, because the bill was one to which he attached considerable importance. He justified the resolutions proposed by the government, which he described as doing all that language could do to defend the honour of that House; but he added, that he was prepared to go farther, and to reserve to himself the right of acting. Referring to the precedents that had been so much insisted on, he denied emphatically that they had in the slightest degree touched the question under consideration, for there was not one of them that could properly be called a precedent. There was, he said, a great difference between the House of Lords advising the alteration of a money bill and rejecting the repeal of a tax. The House of Commons had declared that they could spare from the revenue of the country 1,125,000*l.* of taxation, and that, having an option between the tea and the paper duties as to which they should remit, they chose that which they believed would prove more beneficial to the country, though perhaps not the most popular. The result had been, that the House of Lords had assumed to themselves a power of dictating to the House of Commons, and saying that the country could not spare such a remission of taxation. He admitted that it would be very acceptable to have that money placed at their disposal; but he considered that the duty of the government to the country rendered it imperative upon them to carry out the promise which they had made. With this speech the interest of the debate ended; it was, indeed, continued and adjourned, but all that was to be said on the subject had been spoken, and the final decision of the question was left to a future occasion. An attempt made by Lord Fermoy to push the matter farther was defeated by a majority of thirty-nine.

For some time past the invasion panic had been gaining strength, and was fomented by a man who of all others ought to have known better. Lord Palmerston, who had embroiled himself with Lord John Russell by his excessive eagerness to recognise the Empire; who had done so much to cement that alliance with France which had prosecuted the Crimean war to what he regarded as a satisfactory termination; who had in this very session concluded a commercial treaty with France;—this very Lord Palmerston was the man to come forward to propose a vote of two millions, as a first instalment of a much larger sum, to be expended in fortifying our dockyards, and providing against the contingency of a sudden

and treacherous attack from that government of which he had all along been the patron and the zealous advocate. In vain did the emperor, in a letter addressed to Lord Cowley, and full of good sense and right feeling towards this country, endeavour to allay the alarm that had been excited, and to show, by statements of facts which might easily be tested, how utterly groundless these fears were. In vain did Mr. Bright and a few other members protest against this reckless and ridiculous prodigality. Lord Palmerston urged forward his project; the appeal to the Gallophobian instincts of the country and of the House of Commons was responded to as it had been responded to on so many previous occasions, and, after various amendments had been considered and rejected, the resolutions were carried by a majority of 229. At the same time reviews of the newly formed volunteer regiments were held in all parts of the country. 21,000 men were mustered in Hyde Park, and 11,000 at Knowsley, the seat of the Earl of Derby; prizes for successful rifle-shooting were proposed and awarded, and a defensive stir was made which seemed to indicate that some great peril was impending over the country.

Nothing could more clearly show the hollowness and unreality of the panic than the treatment of a motion made by Sir De Lacy Evans for the fortification of Woolwich. He had just commenced his speech, and was enforcing in very earnest tones the danger in which the country was placed, in case of an invasion, by the unprotected state of this great naval arsenal, when a member moved that the House should be counted. The requisite forty were not present, and so Woolwich was left exposed for at least another year to all the dangers against which Sir De Lacy Evans was endeavouring to warn the nation.

The question of the paper duties was submitted to the House of Commons in another shape, on Monday, the 6th of August. Mr. Gladstone moved a resolution for removing so much of the customs duty on paper as exceeded the excise duty at home. Notwithstanding the late period of the session at which it was brought forward, the benches on both sides of the House were well filled, and there were all the usual symptoms of a strong party contest. Great exertions were made by both parties to muster their respective adherents. One member was brought back from Switzerland, another from Beyrout; but the ministers triumphed in a House of 449 by a majority of thirty-three; and the satisfaction of the Liberal party, and their appreciation of the value of Mr. Gladstone's services, were shown by the loud cheers

that greeted this victory, which were prolonged for more than five minutes when he rose to propose his second resolution.

The law reforms of the government shared the fate of their parliamentary reform. Like it, they fell through rather on account of the time required for the consideration of questions of finance than on any other ground, except perhaps the fact that the Lower House contained upwards of one hundred and fifty gentlemen of the long robe, the interests of many of whom were no doubt affected by the proposed changes, and all of whom would probably have something to say respecting them.

A strong agitation was raised by the Dissenters against a provision contained in the census act of this year, which ordered that the religious denomination of every adult in the country should be ascertained. The motive of this opposition was the belief that numbers of persons who attended no place of worship, and really belonged to no religious denomination, would profess to be members of the Established Church, and that in this way the number of Churchmen, and the proportion they bore to the Dissenters, would be made to appear greater than it really was. Numerous petitions were sent up both in favour of and in opposition to the proposed religious census, and the project was ultimately abandoned.

Throughout the autumn of this year the negotiations for settling the manifold and intricate details of the tariff established in accordance with the terms of the commercial treaty negotiated with France in the commencement of 1860, were ably and diligently carried on by Mr. Cobden with the French government at Paris. Great and not altogether unsuccessful efforts had been made on both sides of the Channel to excite a prejudice against the treaty; but the groundlessness of the objections raised against it were best shown by the fact that while in England it was loudly proclaimed that our government had been duped by the astuter diplomacy of France, it was still more loudly complained in France that the interests of that country had been sacrificed to those of England. Both allegations were baseless. Each country was greatly benefited by the removal of restrictions which had shackled the free movements of commerce and kept it down to less than a tithe of what it became under the liberal system which Mr. Cobden succeeded in establishing by the enlightened patronage and co-operation of the French emperor.

Never perhaps had the queen been hailed with more ardent demonstrations of loyalty than when she opened the session of 1861

on Thursday, the 5th of February. From Buckingham Palace to the Houses of Parliament she was welcomed with one loud, sustained, boisterous cheer. There was nothing in the circumstances of the opening calculated to call forth this enthusiasm; it was a tribute of loyalty to the person of the Sovereign. The royal speech was very meagre in its promises of important legislation. On the question of reform it was silent, and the only promise of legislation it held out had reference to some of those law reforms which had so often been under the consideration of parliament. When the address, in reply to the speech, was brought forward, Mr. White moved an amendment expressive of dissatisfaction at the omission of all reference to the question of parliamentary reform. Mr. Disraeli, expressing, no doubt, the feeling of his party, approved of this omission, and so did Lord John Russell, on the ground that he thought it better to leave the question altogether untouched than to bring in a measure which would only cause disappointment and waste valuable time. There was a levity in his tone on this occasion that drew a severe rebuke from Mr. Bright, who said, "It is not many years ago since the noble lord shed bitter tears on the very subject which he has this evening treated with indecorous jocularity." Mr. White's amendment was supported by only 46 against 129.

A question of no small importance was submitted to parliament on the Thursday following. Lord Palmerston then moved for the appointment of a select committee to consider whether, by any alteration in the form of proceeding of the House, the despatch of public business could be more effectually promoted. He proposed that bills dropped in one session might be taken up in the succeeding session at the stage at which they had been stopped, instead of recommencing entirely. That in this and other ways public business might be greatly expedited, seems certain; and, though objections were raised by Mr. Disraeli, the motion was agreed to.

The debates of this session were characterized by more than usual tameness. There were, however, one or two questions which roused and excited a lively interest; and none more so than a bill for the abolition of church-rates, brought forward by Sir John Trelawney. This question had been repeatedly before the House of Commons, and the divisions on it had up to this time shown an increasing feeling in favour of the entire abolition of the impost. But now it had been determined, both in and out of the House, to make a great effort to turn the tide. Mr. Disraeli placed himself at the head of the movement. A short time before the commence-

of the session he had attended a combined meeting of clergy and laity of the rural deanery of Amersham, Bucks, at which he stated that in his opinion the question of church-rates involved the still more important question of the existence of a national church. This declaration was the signal for a strong agitation in favour of church-rates. All members of the Church were exhorted to come to the rescue; meetings were held and petitions were got up throughout the country. Churchmen were recommended to write to their representatives and urge them to vote in favour of the retention of the rate for the support of the fabrics of the churches, or at least not to vote against it. When, therefore, Sir J. Trelawney's bill came on for its second reading, the Conservative party mustered strongly. Mr. Gladstone spoke earnestly in defence of church-rates, amidst cheers from the opposition, which were described at the time as "ecstatic." His colleague, Lord John Russell, spoke, but less effectively, on the other side of the question; and on the division the second reading of Sir J. Trelawney's bill was carried by 281 to 266, being a great falling-off from the previous majority in its favour. Accordingly, the defenders of church-rates in and out of the House redoubled their exertions; and the result was, that when the division took place on the third reading, there were 274 on each side. The Speaker therefore gave his casting vote against it, on the ground that, as the numbers were so large on both sides at this stage, it was desirable to give the House an opportunity of reconsidering the question.

The chancellor of the exchequer brought forward his annual financial statement on Monday, April 15. The House was beset by multitudes, patiently but vainly hoping to obtain admission to the strangers' gallery, and the interest manifested within was at least as extraordinary as that exhibited outside. Putting aside the consideration of the two millions voted for the fortifications at the close of last year, Mr. Gladstone informed the House that the estimated expenditure was 73,664,000*l.*, but that the actual expenditure only amounted to 72,842,000*l.* He then came to the revenue, and began by comparing the income of the past with that of the two preceding years. He stated that in 1859 there was a favourable balance of about 1,200,000*l.* In 1859 the revenue was 71,089,000*l.*, in 1860 it was 70,283,000*l.* But he pointed out that the difference was partly accounted for by the circumstance that leap-year had occurred in the preceding year, and that Good Friday and the day following had been reckoned in the one year and not in the other.

The estimated expenditure for the coming year was 69,900,000*l.* and the estimated revenue 71,823,000*l.*; there was therefore a surplus of 1,923,000*l.* Under these circumstances the government proposed to remit the additional penny on the income tax that was imposed in 1860, which would cause a loss to the present financial year of 850,000*l.* They also proposed to repeal the duty on paper on the 1st of October, by which the revenue would lose about 665,000*l.* This would reduce the surplus for the year to 408,000*l.* The chancellor of the exchequer then gave his reasons for not assenting to some minor remissions of taxes, respecting which he had received strong remonstrances from the trading community. He proposed to renew the income tax, and the taxes on tea and sugar, for one year only.

The question of the paper duties was still undecided. Should the Commons send up another bill for their repeal to be again rejected by the Peers? That was a course which the public opinion of the country would not tolerate. Nevertheless, great efforts were made; and the claims of tea to a remission of duty were put forward. No tax was more unpopular than that on tea, which in England had come to be regarded as a necessary of life. But now the English people firmly repelled the temptation and declared for the repeal of the paper duties in such a way as would settle the constitutional question that had arisen between the Lords and the Commons in favour of the latter. Backed, therefore, by the strongly expressed opinion of the majority of the English people, Mr. Gladstone, on the 6th of May, announced that he intended to include all the chief financial propositions of the budget in one bill, instead of dividing it into several bills, as had hitherto been the practice. This virtually placed the Lords in the position of being obliged to accept or reject the whole financial scheme, and deprived them not only of the power that they had exercised in the case of the paper duties, but of that power of examination and amendment of details which they had hitherto enjoyed without dispute, and which but for this unfortunate revival of a dormant and useless right they would have retained. This was not accomplished without a severe struggle. The influence of the aristocracy in the House of Commons was still great; a large number of members in the Lower House were heirs-apparent, presumptive, or expectant, of some peerage; a still larger number were returned by constituencies over which members of the aristocracy exercised a very powerful influence; to this must be added the fact that, whenever a question arose between the two-

Houses, the Conservative party almost to a man was ready to support the claims of the Peers. But on this occasion the leader of the Conservative party possessed another advantage, of which he made great use.

Lord Derby, during his brief term of office, had earned no small amount of popularity among the Irish, by obtaining a grant towards the maintenance of a mail-packet service between the port of Galway and the United States. It was hoped that this service would prove a source of wealth, both to Galway and the neighbouring districts. But the grant was withdrawn by the government of Lord Palmerston, and great was the indignation excited in the parts of Ireland which had expected to profit most largely by the scheme. The consequence was, that the government had become exceedingly unpopular in the sister country; and no effort was spared by many who had hitherto been reckoned amongst its supporters to bring Lord Derby back into office before the withdrawal of the grant had been irrevocably effected. A priest named Daly, who had been mainly instrumental in obtaining the grant, made great efforts to secure its continuance. He came over armed with credentials from men of all parties, and used his utmost exertions to cajole or intimidate the Irish Liberal members into giving their support to the Conservative party. A great effort, therefore, was made to defeat the plan of the chancellor of the exchequer. It was strongly opposed by Mr. Disraeli. Lord Robert Cecil distinguished himself by the violence of his attacks on the government, and especially on Mr. Gladstone. On the other hand, Sir J. Graham, though suffering from incurable disease, came down to the House, and expressed his warm approval of the course taken by the government. When the House divided, the numbers were:—

For the bill	...	...	...	...	..	296
Against	...	...	...	...	...	281
Majority in favour of the government						15

The efforts of the numerous penny papers which had been started in anticipation of the reduction of the duty, and could not be profitably carried on while it remained unrepealed, contributed in no small degree to this result. Mr. Disraeli, finding that by attempting to continue the contest he would only expose himself to a still more signal defeat, wisely yielded; and the Peers were obliged to submit.

The Bankruptcy Bill, one of the few government measures promised in the queen's speech, was brought in by the attorney-general, Sir R. Bethell, and passed through both Houses, but so altered in form that its framer declared that it had not one valuable feature left in it. He soon after became Lord Westbury and lord chancellor, that office having been rendered vacant by the sudden death of Lord Campbell. The question of reform was raised in this session by the motion of Mr. Locke King for lowering the county franchise to a 10*l.* qualification, and that of Mr. Baines for reducing the borough franchise to 6*l.*, but both proposals were summarily rejected.

The civil war which had broken out in the United States of America seemed at this time not unlikely to terminate in the formation of two separate republics; one composed of the free states of the North, and the other of the slave states of the South. It does not fall within the province of this History to trace the course of that great struggle, except so far as it affected our own country. The quarrel had its origin in the persevering efforts of the opponents of slavery in the North to obtain the abolition of that institution throughout the Union. These efforts had gained a great triumph in the election for the first time of an anti-slavery president of the Union in the person of Abraham Lincoln. This was the signal for the preparation for a great effort on the part of the slaveholders to separate themselves from the free states. On the 20th of December, 1860, the state convention of South Carolina, sitting at Charleston, adopted an ordinance dissolving the connection between that state and the other states of the Union, and took measures to resist any attempt to enforce the authority of the government of the United States over the province. The example thus set was followed in the course of 1861 by the states of Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Texas, Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee, North Carolina. President Buchanan, who was in office when the secession commenced, was strongly Southern in his sympathies; and, instead of taking prompt and vigorous measures to suppress the rebellion in its infancy, temporized with it, hoping that some solution of the difficulty might be found without recourse to arms. His successor took a more decided course, and prepared, with the zealous assistance of his ministers, to maintain the authority of the central government in all parts of the United States. The rebellious states formed themselves into a confederation, of which Mr. Jefferson Davis was appointed the first president. The two parties were mustering their forces, and

preparing for a war which seemed likely to be long and bloody. It might have been anticipated that, as this was a struggle into which the Southern states had entered with the avowed object of maintaining and perpetuating slavery within their borders, the feeling in favour of the Northern states in England would have been strong and unanimous. But the majority of the English people had not forgotten many displays of arrogance that had been made by the government of the States, and were rather disposed to welcome the humiliation of the United States than to rejoice at the prospect of the liberation of the vast number of negroes who were held in bondage throughout the Southern confederacy. It is true that a considerable part of the nation, and especially of the working classes, was superior to this unworthy jealousy, and gave an unalloyed sympathy to the North; but a large portion of the government, of the aristocracy, of the middle classes, and not a few also of the lower orders, strongly sympathized with the South, and seemed to abjure that spirit which, at the cost of twenty millions, had purchased freedom for the slave throughout the British dominions, and compelled our government to make such costly sacrifices in order to put down the slave-trade and slavery in other parts of the world. When, therefore, intelligence reached England that the Southerners had achieved a signal success at the battle of Bull's Run, and had pursued their flying and panic-stricken opponents almost into Washington, the news was received with general satisfaction; and when it was found, later in the year, that a United States war-vessel, the *San Jacinto*, commanded by Captain Wilkes, had stopped the *Trent*, West-Indian steamer, and with needless insolence had forcibly taken Messrs. Mason, Slidell, McFarland, and Eustis, who were on board her and under the protection of the British flag, a thrill of patriotic emotion passed through the country. The sensational announcements put forth by the newspapers, such as "Outrage on the British Flag," increased the indignation that the act itself had awakened. "What!" said the men who had been accustomed to sing "Rule, Britannia!" "England insulted on the sea, and by the Americans, whose insolence we have so often endured! Now is the time to draw the sword and throw away the scabbard." Some voices timidly suggested that perhaps, after all, Captain Wilkes had right on his side, and that, though he had behaved with swaggering insolence, he had only done what he was authorized by international law to do, and what certainly had been done before, with at least equal insolence, by many an English captain. The highest legal authorities were

consulted; and there was a moment of hushed and anxious suspense, until they gave a distinct opinion that the action of Captain Wilkes was illegal. This opinion was received with loud exultation. It was forgotten that the American legal authorities might deliver an opposite opinion to that given by our legists. It was forgotten that the South was fighting for slavery, and the North for freedom. It was forgotten that in the southern port of Savannah, Captain Vaughan, the commander of a British vessel, guilty of no other crime than that of entertaining a man of colour at dinner, had been seized on board his ship, torn from the arms of his wife, and then tarred and feathered. All these things were buried in oblivion; and from one end of the country to the other there was one loud cry for war and vengeance. Messrs. Bright and Cobden stood alone among our public men, in resisting the mania that prevailed. Lord Palmerston put himself at the head of the movement, and by his acts and language stimulated the prevalent feeling. A despatch was at once forwarded to Lord Lyons, the British minister at Washington, instructing him peremptorily to demand the liberation of the four gentlemen who had been taken out of the *Trent*, with a suitable apology for the insult which had been inflicted on the British flag. By another despatch he was instructed to allow the American government a delay of only seven days to deliberate on the course they would adopt, and was directed to leave Washington with all the members of his legation, and repair to London with the archives of the embassy, if an answer was not given within the stipulated time, or if any answer should be given except a promise of compliance with the demands of the British government. This message was supported by France, Austria, and Prussia, in a manner which showed that they were prepared to give moral if not material support to the efforts that England might make to obtain redress. Without waiting for a reply, the British government made immediate preparations for war. The Guards and other troops were hurried off to Canada; and their departure was accompanied by loud cheering and other manifestations of popular feeling. The American mob, even more foolish than the London mob, demanded that the captives should be retained. The American congress passed a vote of thanks to Captain Wilkes; but the American government wisely yielded, and the gentlemen who had been taken out of the *Trent* were sent back in a British ship of war; and so the war clouds, which at one time looked so black and thunderous, rolled away, not a little to the disappointment of many who would gladly have taken advantage

of the difficulties of the United States in order to cripple their power permanently.

Towards the close of this year an event occurred which spread sorrow and mourning through the land, from the palace of the Sovereign to the cottage of the lowest and poorest of her subjects. On the 8th of December the *Court Circular* stated that the Prince Consort had been confined to his apartments by a feverish cold and pains in the limbs. On Wednesday, the 11th of December, a formal bulletin informed the public that his royal highness was suffering from fever, unattended by unfavourable symptoms, but likely to continue for some time. It was therefore a terrible surprise to the Londoners when, on Sunday morning, just after midnight, the great bell of St. Paul's, booming through the deep silence, spread far and wide the tidings that the Consort of the Queen was dead. But, though the nation generally was wholly unprepared for the event, it had been known some time before to the Queen, to her family, and to the court, that the danger was imminent. The worth and services of the deceased prince were most strongly attested by the illustrious lady who had enjoyed the best opportunities of appreciating them, and who described herself with the simple truthfulness of grief, as "the heart-broken Queen of England." The prince was in the prime of life, being only forty-one years of age, and having up to the time of this illness enjoyed excellent health, which, combined with temperate and regular habits, seemed to give promise of a long life.

Prince Albert was a man of great and varied accomplishments. The speeches delivered by him on several public occasions showed that his naturally reflective mind had largely profited by the lessons of German philosophy received in his youth. He was a warm and discriminating patron of art, and he loved the society of men of genius. He took a scientific and intelligent interest in agriculture. He entertained sound and elevated views with regard to the industrial progress of the country of his adoption, which were conspicuously manifested in the part he took in promoting the Great Exhibition of 1851. That of 1862 was even more completely his work, though he did not live to witness its commencement.

His death was a terrible blow to the Queen. By it she lost her best adviser, the natural guardian of her children, her devoted friend and companion, the joy of her life, the solace of her many anxieties. A few months before, she had lost her mother; she now endured a more cruel blow in the loss of her husband. Her great consolation under this affliction was in the comforts of religion

in the love of her family, and the warm sympathy of her people, to whom her private virtues, no less than the faithful and conscientious discharge of her public duties as a constitutional queen, had greatly endeared her. The funeral, though conducted with all due ceremonial, was strictly private. The sorrow of the bereaved queen was too deep to bear the trial of a public interment.

The grief of the bereaved queen cast a shadow of sadness over the opening of the session of 1862. She of course did not appear, and there was an absence of the stir and curiosity which even an opening of the session by commission ordinarily excites. The topic which alone monopolised the attention of both Houses was the loss which the sovereign and the nation had sustained. The gloom which pervaded parliament at the commencement of the session seemed to overhang it throughout its continuance, which was characterised by a marked absence of political excitement and party struggles, and an evident desire to spare the queen all needless pain and anxiety. A subscription for a national memorial to the deceased prince was set on foot; and as it had been suggested that the choice of the memorial should be left to the queen, it was announced that her majesty would not shrink from the performance of this melancholy duty, but would be guided in discharging it by the advice of those who were best qualified to give an opinion on the subject.

The civil war in America was now beginning to make itself deeply felt in this country. In the first quarter of the year our exports to the States had diminished from 21,667,000*l.* to 9,058,000*l.*, This alone must have produced a great derangement of monetary and commercial affairs, and the necessary accompaniment of that derangement in the enforced idleness and distress of large masses of the working population. But this class was still more affected by the sudden and almost entire cessation of the importation of cotton from America, whence the greater and by far the best part of our supplies had hitherto been drawn. To these causes of distress was to be added the partial failure of the crops in the last harvest, which, though good in quality, was deficient in quantity. All these circumstances tended to dry up the resources of the country, and greatly to lessen its revenues. And yet, such was the success which had attended Mr. Gladstone's financial operations and the treaty which Mr. Cobden had negotiated with France, that notwithstanding these disadvantages and depressing circumstances, the revenue showed an increase of no less than 2,000,000*l.*; and while our trade with the United States had so seriously diminished,

that with Franco had increased within the period of a single year from 2,190,000*l.* to 6,910,000*l.* This increase was balanced by a nearly corresponding increase of expenditure, chiefly owing to the affair of the *Trent*, through which this country obtained satisfaction for its wounded honour at a cost of upwards of a million of money; so that when the chancellor of the exchequer made up his accounts he found that the sum at his disposal was only 150,000*l.* With a balance so small; with a war in America that had already produced much distress in the manufacturing districts, and the continuance of which was certain to be attended by a rapid increase of that distress; with the danger of the country being involved, as she had already so nearly been, in war—it would have been in the highest degree rash in the chancellor of the exchequer to attempt to carry out bold financial operations such as had so favourably distinguished his previous budgets. He was therefore compelled to content himself with a few changes in the incidence of taxation, such as the replacement of the duties on hops by an increase of brewers' licenses, and a lowering of the duty on playing cards.

The law-courts were inconvenient in arrangement, insufficient in size, miserably mean in appearance both externally and internally, utterly unworthy of the great, venerable, and historic tribunals of England, and clinging to the magnificent palace of the legislature like parasitic excrescences, marring the beauty of the building, and hiding its fair proportions. It was felt that the erection of new law-courts, worthy of the great purpose to which they were devoted, and affording all requisite accommodation, had become a matter of absolute necessity. This could only be effected at an expence so vast that, in the present state of the finances, the government might well hesitate to sanction it, but fortunately there was a large sum of money disposable for this purpose. Certain funds in chancery had accumulated during a long period, the greater part of which was never likely to be claimed. It was proposed that they should be appropriated to the erection of new courts, and a bill was brought into parliament sanctioning this application of them, on condition that if the owners of any portion should come forward and substantiate their claim, they should receive the amount due to them. No application of the money could be more proper, and it was exceedingly unlikely that any claimants would now appear. But the spirit of party and personal hostility interfered to defeat the project. It was known to be a favourite plan of the lord chancellor, who was very unpopular with the legal profession generally, and especially with

some of its leading members. When, therefore, the question of the second reading of the measure was brought forward in the House of Commons the lawyers mustered in great force, and the discussion was carried on with all the excitement which is generally raised by a debate into which personal feeling largely enters. Mr. Selwyn moved an amendment, on which a division was called for. When the paper containing the numbers was handed in, Mr. Brand (one of the tellers on the government side) gave it to Mr. Selwyn, the mover of the amendment, and one of the tellers on the opposite side. This, according to the usual parliamentary practice, was supposed to denote that there was a majority in favour of the amendment. The opposition thereupon raised a loud shout of triumph; but their exultation was somewhat damped by the announcement that the numbers for and against the amendment were exactly equal. The Speaker was about to give his casting vote on the side of the government, when it was discovered that a gentleman in full evening dress had been unable to find his way through the division turnstile into the House. He was therefore brought before the Speaker, and asked which way he intended to vote. He replied that he should vote against the amendment; thus causing it to be rejected by a majority of one. It is usual when an amendment has been rejected to allow the original motion to pass. But the opponents of the bill had ascertained that two members who voted against the amendment would not vote in favour of the second reading. The excitement was now tremendous on both sides; and it increased when, at this critical moment, a government official entered the House. However, just as the doors were being closed, a member of the opposition slipped through them. Thus in the division the opponents of the bill were in a majority of two. Their exultation now went beyond all bounds. They did not cheer—they absolutely yelled, exhibiting such a scene of wild triumph as has rarely been displayed within the walls of the House of Commons.

On Wednesday, the 14th of May, there was another remarkable debate and division on the church-rate question, which was decided last year by the Speaker's casting vote. This circumstance gave an extraordinary interest to the question when again brought forward, and caused an attendance which for a Wednesday afternoon debate was unusually large. Mr. S. Estcourt moved a hostile amendment; and when the division took place it was at first thought that it had again issued in a tie. But when, amid the intense expectation of the House, the numbers were given out, it was found that 287 had

supported Mr. Estcourt's amendment, while 286 had voted against it; so that it was carried by a majority of one. This small gain was hailed with great delight by the supporters of church-rates in the House. However, Mr. Estcourt's amendment having now been carried, had, according to the rules of the House, to be put as a substantive motion; and, on a division demanded by the defeated party, it was carried by 288 to 271; a result which called forth another burst of noisy exultation. In 1863 the majority in favour of the retention of church-rates rose to ten.

A sum of 1,200,000*l.* in addition to what had been already spent for the same purpose was asked from the House, to be employed in the construction of fortifications intended to defend the country against invasion. It was alleged on the part of the government that the expenditure was demanded by public opinion. It might more correctly have been described as demanded by public panic, which the premier himself had stimulated. However, it was the subject of repeated debates; in the course of one of which Mr. Cobden distinctly accused Lord Palmerston of fomenting the alarm which gave rise to the demand for additional fortifications; and to these strictures his lordship replied in a very angry tone, attacking Mr. Cobden, sneering at the French treaty—to the manifest dissatisfaction of some of his colleagues, who had taken an active part in negotiating it—and declaring that though Mr. Cobden was a great authority on questions of free-trade, he was on military and naval matters in a state of blindness and delusion, and therefore unsafe as a guide or adviser in matters of national defence.

One striking peculiarity of this session was the large number of counts-out that occurred in the course of it. Counting-out had, in fact, become a regular institution. There were gentlemen who had undertaken the task of endeavouring to provide that, at a certain moment, there should be fewer than forty members in the House or within call. When that object was supposed to be attained, another member slipped in from behind the Speaker's chair and moved that the House should be counted; and if those who wished for a continuance of the debate could not muster the required forty, the discussion was brought to a close.

The American war, and the "cotton famine," as it was then termed, which had arisen from it, had to a great extent deprived two millions of persons of their usual employment, and was gradually reducing them to destitution. What the consequences would be if the war should be protracted for a much longer period,

it was impossible to foresee: they would no doubt be terrible indeed; even now they were very serious. An enormous increase of pauperism had taken place in the manufacturing districts, and it seemed to be the imperative duty of the government to step in and endeavour to alleviate the misery and destitution into which the inhabitants of those districts were falling through no fault of their own, especially as they were exhibiting, amidst all their privations, a fortitude, an endurance, and an independence, which commanded the respect of the whole world. Never before had the working classes in any country exhibited in a more praiseworthy manner the desire to support themselves by their own industry, and to avoid being burdensome to others. And it was felt everywhere that these were persons towards whom it would be disgraceful to enforce those severe provisions of the new poor-law, which had been framed for the purpose of checking imposition and curing inveterate indolence. Great efforts, therefore, were made to alleviate distress borne with such heroic patience. Private charity was doing all that it could. Many individuals placed money at the disposal of the clergy of the suffering districts for the relief of their parishioners. Large sums were also raised by a society, at the head of which the Lord Mayor of London placed himself; noble efforts were made by a relief fund committee, sitting at Manchester under the presidency of the Earl of Derby. The Queen gave 2000*l.*; the Pasha of Egypt, who happened to be in England at the time, generously contributed 1000*l.*; and other persons of inferior rank displayed a liberality no less princely. Many of the ill-paid labourers of the South of England out of their deep poverty contributed to the necessities of those who were for the moment poorer than themselves. But private bounty could not meet the destitution of nearly half a million of persons. Ministers were therefore called on to take the matter up, and not only to use the powers that belonged to them under the existing law, but to make such changes in it as would enable them to meet the emergency in a fitting manner. Accordingly, on Tuesday, the 22nd of July, Mr. Villiers, as president of the new poor-law board, introduced into the House of Commons a bill on the subject. On the following Thursday it was read a second time, and passed rapidly and without opposition through its remaining stages. Other measures for the relief of the distressed districts were also adopted. In the East and West Indies, in Australia, in New Zealand, and even in countries lying outside the British empire—such, for instance, as Brazil—a great impulse was given to the cultivation of the cotton plant, and hopes

were entertained that at the end of some years, if the war should still be prolonged, our cotton supply would be equal in quantity, if not in quality, to that we had been accustomed to receive. Attempts were also made by blockade-runners to obtain supplies of cotton from the Southern States; and, notwithstanding the strict watch which was maintained by the Northern belligerents, light swift steamers, constructed for the purpose, managed to elude their vigilance or escape their pursuit.

In consequence of the efforts we have mentioned there was a very perceptible diminution in the number of those who were dependent on public and private charity. The worst was evidently past; and though the factory operatives complained somewhat bitterly of the dirt and inferior quality of the "Sutrat," and the greater difficulty with which its manufacture was attended, they were glad to obtain the means of supporting themselves under every disadvantage and difficulty, and to look forward to a time when, the struggle in America being brought to a conclusion, they would once again be supplied with their favourite material. Thus there was a gradual return to the habits of manly independence by which the population of the manufacturing districts had always been distinguished.

The reader will no doubt have observed that this session was of the number of those in which no great measure of public policy, no great organic change was made, or even proposed, by the government. This was partly owing to the unconcealed aversion of the head of the cabinet to force on such changes; partly to the death of the Prince Consort, and to the unwillingness that was consequently felt to engage in struggles which might aggravate the sorrows and anxieties of the bereaved Queen, and partly also to the Great Exhibition, which was opened on the 1st of May.

The opening took place under favourable circumstances. The South-Eastern Railway Company had for some time back been daily bringing from Boulogne-sur-Mer to London some 400 passengers, and foreigners were flocking in by Dover, by Newhaven, by Southampton, and other ports in proportionate numbers. The sum received on the day before the opening of the exhibition exceeded by ten thousand pounds that which had been received on the day preceding the opening of the Exhibition of 1851. The multitudes that were assembled within the Exhibition and outside of it were enormous. But the recent death of Prince Albert, drawing after it, as it did, the absence of the Sovereign, cast a shadow of gloom on the inaugural ceremony. The Prince of Wales was in Egypt.

Many sovereigns, whose presence had been anticipated, were not there. Some unpleasant feeling was caused by the determination of the commissioners to whom the arrangements had been intrusted, to require the exhibitors to pay for their admission to the ceremony at the same rate as the rest of the public. Then, an ode having been composed for the occasion by Tennyson, and set to music by Sterndale Bennett, M. Costa refused to lead the orchestra, on the ground of some personal dispute that had formerly arisen between Mr. Bennett and himself; and when M. Sainton replaced M. Costa at the head of the orchestra, it was somewhat angrily asserted that Englishmen could be found who would have led it as well as an Italian or a Frenchman. Half the articles to be exhibited were not yet unpacked; and loud complaints were made of the ugliness of the building, the bad taste of its decorations, and the unskilful arrangement and classification of its contents. The opening ceremony was conducted with as much *éclat* as could be expected under such circumstances. The Duke of Cambridge appeared for the Queen, Lord Granville took the part in the ceremony which would have been performed by Prince Albert if he had been alive, and Prince Oscar of Sweden and the Prince Royal of Prussia represented the sovereigns of Europe. Through an unfortunate blunder the foreign ambassadors had not been invited. The music of Bennett and Auber in some degree compensated for the deficiencies in the opening ceremony and in the procession, which included the members of the Japanese embassy; the members of both Houses of Parliament, with their respective Speakers; the corporation of London; and a great number of English and foreign notabilities, all arrayed in the costumes of the countries to which they belonged and the offices they held. After the procession had passed through the building, the Duke of Cambridge said, in a loud and distinct voice, "By the command of the Queen, I now declare the Exhibition open." Notwithstanding the undeniable ugliness of the building, and the bad taste of many of its decorations—respects in which it contrasted very disadvantageously with the fairy lightness and beauty of the Crystal Palace, it was not ill adapted for the purpose for which it was designed. There was a great and marked improvement both in the quality and quantity of the objects exhibited, especially in the foreign departments. While in the exhibition of 1851 the number of foreign exhibitors was 6,566, in that of this year they were 16,456. On the other hand there was a diminution in the number of visitors to the exhibition, which was less than at the first exhibition by about 50,000. During the first month after the

opening of the exhibition the prices of admission varied from five guineas to half-a-crown, and during the whole of this period it was in a very imperfect and unfinished state. It was not until Monday, the 2nd of July, that the masses were admitted at a shilling, which thenceforth became the usual charge. The distress prevailing in the manufacturing districts, and the war which was being carried on in America, no doubt had an injurious influence on the attendance. There was much difference of opinion expressed in the public press with regard to this exhibition. Some writers dwelt with complacent admiration on the unrivalled assemblage of the products of the industry of all nations; while others derided it as a "monster bazaar," a "great advertising medium," a "palace of puffs."

The ascents of aeronauts have generally been associated in fact and in men's minds with fireworks, tight-rope dancing, and other amusements of that nature, or at best have been regarded as mere exhibitions of audacity on the part of those who ventured to make a voyage not unlikely to terminate in a precipitate and fatal fall. But the balloon ascent of September 5, 1862, was an event in the scientific history of England. Mr. Glaisher, who made this great aerial voyage of discovery into the upper regions of the atmosphere, was accompanied by Mr. Coxwell, an experienced aeronaut, and provided by the British Association with the means of accomplishing his daring feat, and making the scientific observations which were the chief object of it. Mr. Glaisher became unconscious; and Mr. Coxwell, finding that his arms were paralysed, seized the rope with his teeth, and, by a movement of his head, caused a sufficient escape of gas to determine the descent of the balloon. He then roused Mr. Glaisher. The last observation had been made at 1.54; at 1.57 he was in a sleep from which he probably would never have awoken if Mr. Coxwell had not succeeded in determining the descent of the balloon.

The manner in which the distress that prevailed in the manufacturing districts during the period of the American civil war was borne by their inhabitants, was in no slight degree owing to the moral and material results of societies which had been established throughout them, and which were known by the name of "co-operative societies." We have already seen that it was especially in these districts that Chartism had sprung up and flourished, and that with Chartism socialistic and communistic theories largely mingled. As the absolute impossibility of obtaining the Charter became more and more evident, and as each successive attempt to agitate for it brought nothing but ruin on those by whom it was

made, the thoughts of the more intelligent of the working classes were more and more turned towards the realization of those socialistic and communistic ideas with which their minds had been imbued; and the magnificent hopes they inspired served to support and carry forward those who held them through difficulties under which they would otherwise have fainted. The following extract from their first programme will show the spirit in which they entered on their undertaking, and the visionary hopes by which they were animated :—

“That as soon as practicable this society shall proceed to arrange the powers of production, distribution, education, and government; or, in other words, to establish a self-supporting home colony of united interests, to assist other societies in establishing such colonies.”

Various abortive attempts had been made from time to time to realize these ideas; but they had failed chiefly through the moral and industrial defects of those by whom they were tried. At length the experiment was made at Rochdale by men who, though extremely poor and almost destitute of book-learning, were endowed with the qualifications necessary for carrying the enterprise to a successful issue. The example thus set was followed in all the large towns of the manufacturing districts. But we shall best comprehend the nature of this great movement by fixing our attention on the origin and progress of the Rochdale society, which served as a pattern to the rest, by whom its rules and methods were almost exactly copied. It was at the close of the year 1843 that the Rochdale Equitable Pioneers' Co-operative Store was first established. The new poor-law had prevented the working men of that town from looking, as they had previously been accustomed to do, to parochial relief as a resource on which, in case of loss of work, they might always fall back. The failure of the Rochdale Savings Bank, recently plundered by its actuary to the extent of 70,000*l.*, had destroyed all faith in that hitherto popular institution; and the Rochdale working men, at least such of them as looked beyond the present moment, seemed to have no alternative left to them but that of spending their little savings in drink or hiding them in an old stocking. It was under these circumstances that twenty-eight Rochdale flannel-weavers managed to scrape together a sovereign each for the purpose of establishing a shop in which they might purchase genuine groceries and other necessities at a moderate price, dividing among themselves whatever profits might remain at the end of the year. The views by which they were actuated are

very clearly exhibited in an account which they shortly after published, of the lofty aims with which they made this very humble experiment:

"The objects of this society are the social and intellectual advancement of its members. It provides them with groceries, butcher's meat, drapery goods, clothes, shoes, clogs, &c. There are competent workmen on the premises to do the work of the members and execute all repairs. The capital is raised in one pound shares, each member being allowed to take not less than five and not more than a hundred, payable at once, or by instalments of three shillings and three-pence per quarter. The profits are divided quarterly, as follows: first, interest at five per cent. per annum on all paid-up shares; second, two and a half per cent. off net profits for educational purposes; the remainder to be divided among the members in proportion to money expended. For the intellectual improvement of the members there is a library consisting of more than 3000 volumes. The librarian is in attendance every Wednesday and Saturday evening from seven to half-past eight o'clock. The news-room is well supplied with newspapers and periodicals, fitted up in a neat and careful manner, and furnished with maps, globes, microscope, telescope, &c. The news-room and library are free to all members. A branch reading-room has been opened at Oldham Road, the readers of which meet every second Monday in January, April, July, and October, to choose and sell the papers."

If any taint of the socialistic and communistic theories in which the society originated still adhered to them, it was rapidly removed by the practical realities with which they had to deal. The prodigious and rapid growth of the establishment at the head of which they were placed required considerable administrative ability, and it was forthcoming. To their honour it should be mentioned, that far from being actuated by any desire to monopolise the advantages they enjoyed, they were animated by a generous spirit of proselytism, which led them to put themselves to considerable trouble and expense in communicating to inquirers from all parts of the world the results of their experience, and aiding them in the formation of new societies. The following extract from a paper printed at an early period of their history, in order to send to all those who applied to them for information with a view to the formation of new societies, illustrates the spirit of generosity and wisdom by which they were animated:—

"1. Procure the authority and protection of the law by enrolment.

"2. Let integrity, intelligence, and ability be indispensable qualifications in the choice of officers and managers, and not wealth or distinction.

"3. Let each member have only one vote, and make no distinction as regards the amount of wealth any member may contribute.

"4. Let majorities rule in all matters of government.

"5. Look well after money matters. Punish fraud, when duly established, by the immediate expulsion of the defrauder.

"6. Buy your goods as much as possible in the first markets; or, if you have the produce of your industry to sell, contrive if possible to sell it in the best.

"7. Never depart from the principle of buying and selling for ready money.

"8. Beware of long reckonings. Quarterly accounts are the best, and should be adopted when practicable.

"9. For the sake of security, always have the accounted value of the 'fixed stock' at least one-fourth less than its marketable value.

"10. Let the members take care that the accounts are properly audited by men of their own choosing.

"11. Let committees of management always have the authority of the members before taking any important or expensive step.

"12. Do not court opposition or publicity; nor fear it when it comes.

"13. Choose those only for your leaders whom you can trust, and then give them your confidence."

As a proof of the great and rapid success that has attended the institution, we may refer to the following statistics, compiled from tables published in the almanacs of the Rochdale societies :—

Year.	Number of members.	Amount of funds.	Business done.	Profits made.
		£	£	£
1844	28	28		
1845	74	181	710	32
1850	600	2,299	13,179	889
1855	1,400	11,032	44,902	3,106
1860	3,450	37,710	152,083	15,906

These numbers sufficiently exhibit the progress of the society during the first and most critical years of its existence. After it

had been carried on for seven years, it was found that more money was offered for investment than could be profitably employed in the store. The directors, therefore, were forced to consider what was to be done with their surplus capital. They must either find profitable employment for it, or refuse to receive it. They determined on adopting the former alternative; and as at the time great complaints were made of the quality of the flour that was sold in the shops, much of which was said to be adulterated, it was determined in 1850 to establish a new society, to be called the Rochdale Co-operative Corn-mill Society, for which a substantial mill was erected in Weir-street, Rochdale. They determined not to erect this building by contract, thus incurring an additional expense of about 1000*l.*; but they cheerfully paid this difference, in the assurance that every man who had laboured in the construction of their mill had received a fair day's wage for a fair day's work, and they maintained that the money had been well spent, because the building was better and more substantial than it would have been if erected by contract. The following short statement, compiled from the same sources as the one we have already given, exhibits the progress made by this second co-operative society:—

Year.	Amount of funds.	Business done.	Profits made.
	£	£	£
1850			
1851	2,163	Account mislaid.	
1855	4,626		1,376
1860	26,618		10,164

The success of these two societies produced great confidence in the co-operative principle, and a general desire among the working classes to invest their savings in them; which compelled the leaders of the co-operative movement to consider what further employment could be found for the funds thus forced on them. In the year 1854 a manufacturing society was formed on the same general principles as the store and the corn-mill society, and seemed likely to prove equally successful. At first they carried on their operations in rooms hired for the purpose, but on the 22nd of April, 1859, they laid the first stone of a cotton-factory of their own, which they completed without borrowing a penny, and with a large balance in the bank. It was universally admitted to be one of the largest,

best-constructed, and best-fitted in the borough of Rochdale, a town by no means behind its neighbours in the size and excellence of its factories. This great work was scarcely finished, when its owners found themselves in a position to commence another factory alongside of the first. The two establishments together cost nearly 100,000*l.*, besides the amount of capital required for their working. Unfortunately, before they were completed the American civil war broke out, and prevented the experiment of a co-operative manufactory from having the same fair trial that had been given to the other co-operative experiments, and which they had passed through so triumphantly. The cotton famine rendered the newly erected factories entirely profitless. It compelled a great number of the shareholders to part with their shares to persons not so fully imbued as themselves with the original spirit of co-operation. One result of this change of proprietorship was, that a rule of the society which gave the operatives a share in the profits was abrogated, and has never since been restored.

But these great works were far from absorbing the whole of the capital, which co-operation multiplied to an extent that seemed almost magical. In the year 1860, while the first factory was still incomplete, a co-operative sick and burial society, founded on thoroughly sound principles, and carrying on its operations upon the extended scale necessary to insure the successful working of such institutions; a co-operative Turkish bath; and lastly, in the year 1861, a land and building society, were established.

The capital of these various institutions in the year 1861 was thus estimated :—

Co-operative store	...	...	...	...	£39,335
Corn-mill	..	...	...	...	29,962
Manufacturing society	...	...	...	...	71,695
Land and building society	...	...	...	...	1,000
Turkish bath	...	...	...	...	350
Total					£142,342
Deduct loans from store to other societies					16,613
Leaving a net capital of					£125,729

It must be remembered, however, that these amounts are far from representing the whole of the financial co-operative progress that had been made in a single town. Several other societies had come into existence within the borough of Rochdale, or its immediate

neighbourhood, which, though independent of the original society, and perhaps not so clearly recognising the principles on which it was founded, nevertheless received and developed the resources of the working classes, and tended to raise them morally, socially, and intellectually as well as materially, and must not therefore be left out of our estimate of the progress that co-operation had made in Rochdale.

But though that period is the one on which we have fixed for giving an account of co-operation, because at this time it had undergone a full and complete trial, in a most satisfactory manner, we must remember that the co-operative principle had not reached its highest development even in the place in which it was first tried successfully. Since then the original Pioneers' Society has made great and remarkable progress. A commodious central store has been erected near to the humble one which was occupied by the original Pioneers, with a splendid library, containing above 9000 well-selected volumes, and a no less splendid news-room, supplied with almost every important periodical. In addition to this, there are no fewer than eleven substantial, well-built branch stores, each doing a large amount of business, and having a convenient news-room and a small reference library of its own. At the time when the American war commenced, the example so successfully set in Rochdale had been followed in almost all the great manufacturing towns. They had provided the working classes who inhabited them with an investment for their savings, from which they received five per cent. regularly paid to them, besides profits; they had also taught them habits of frugality, temperance, patience, sobriety, and self-reliance. During the continuance of the cotton famine the original society flourished in spite of the heavy drain caused by the withdrawal of their deposits by many of the members, who were compelled by want of work to fall back on these resources. They of course underwent much inconvenience, and during these trying years there was a diminution in the amount of their business and their profits. But this was merely a temporary reverse; and as soon as the famine ceased, and indeed even before it had ceased, the societies resumed their onward course, doing more business, obtaining greater profits, and paying larger dividends than ever. During the severest distress, when there was a run on them for money, there was never the slightest hesitation or delay in paying those who wished to withdraw their savings, in accordance with the rules of the societies. And this not in Rochdale only, but in almost

every part of the manufacturing districts in which co-operative societies had been founded on the Rochdale model. In the year 1864 there was a new and important development of the co-operative principle. A wholesale co-operative society, established in Balloon-street, Manchester, commenced business on the 15th of March, supplying the different co-operative societies throughout the North of England. This society was a new step in the progress of co-operation, tending to unite the different co-operative societies disseminated throughout the North of England into one great whole.

The principle described by the term "co-operation," has been recently adopted by the members of the Civil Service in the metropolis. It has been extended, though not yet with marked success, to agriculture; to which, however, it seems peculiarly applicable, combining the advantages which have arisen from the extreme subdivision of properties in France with those which have resulted from the employment of large capitals in carrying out agricultural operations and improvements in England. It does not fall within the sphere of this work to endeavour to forecast the future of co-operation; but it is quite within its province to endeavour to interpret the true character and tendencies of the movement; and the writer of this work submits that its scope has been most fully described by the phrase which the genius of an eminent French writer has employed—"the organisation of labour;" a phrase which has been supposed to indicate something dangerous and revolutionary, but which really has no such import; meaning, in fact, that a time is coming when the constant wants of a continually increasing population will have to be met by a disciplining of industry, under which capital will find its best employment, and each man will have the place appointed to him which he is the most competent to fill, and the work assigned to him which he can best perform to his own advantage as well as to the general profit of the community. It is an idle fear that co-operation will attack property, or try to destroy large capitals. Co-operation, by giving every man a property of his own, makes it the interest of every man to uphold the sacredness of property. By making every man to a certain extent a capitalist, it leads him to respect capital, and to perceive that if there are some enterprises that can be conducted by a number of small capitalists combining their resources to make a large capital, there are others in which it is essential that the capital should be placed in the hands of a single individual, able to act on his own responsibility. By

making the same man at once capitalist and workman, employer and employed, co-operation enables him to comprehend and make allowance for the difficulties of the employer's position, and thus tends to palliate, if not altogether to remove, those unhappy trade disputes which have often produced such mischievous consequences. Co-operation has supplied the manufacturing operative with a means of mental development of the very highest importance. It has been justly remarked that the continued repetition of the same operation, carried on throughout the greater part of a lifetime by the factory operative, has an evident tendency to produce in him a spirit of detail calculated to lower and contract the understanding. Co-operation provides an antidote to this evil. The man whose life is spent in making the heads for pins, or in watching the flight of the shuttle as it carries the thread backwards and forwards across the loom—finds himself at the meetings of his co-operative society in the position of a partner in a great concern, which extends its operations to the uttermost ends of the earth, and is thus led to combine a spirit of widely extended generality with skill and excellence in detail.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE PALMERSTON MINISTRY.

DURING the last weeks of 1862 and the commencement of 1863, London was a prey to a panic caused by criminals known by the name of garroters. Every newspaper contained accounts of robberies they had committed, either by knocking down their victim with a life-preserver, or depriving him of consciousness by a sudden and skilful application of their fingers to his throat. These outrages were committed, not in dark lanes or sequestered places, but in Oxford-street, in Piccadilly, in places over which gas shed a flood of light, and policemen made regular rounds. Such was the panic that these street-robberies caused that people living in the most-frequented parts of London were afraid to leave their houses after dark, or sallied forth armed with revolvers or other means of defence. London was almost as unsafe in the winter of 1862 as it had been in the days of Charles the Second; and the public fear exaggerated the danger, so that at night the streets were nearly empty, the places of amusement deserted, and every man as he walked along eyed his fellow-passengers with suspicion, and prepared himself for a life-and-death struggle. The papers exhorted the public to defend themselves against these assaults. The art of boxing was revived, and became a part of fashionable education; life-preservers, sword-sticks, daggers, revolvers, and large fierce dogs were in great request. The blame of this state of things was cast on ticket-of-leave men and the ticket-of-leave system. It was urged that our treatment of convicts was much too indulgent; that the lot of the criminal was preferable to that of the pauper or the honest labourer; and so the question "What is to be done with our criminals?" which had been asked some years before, was now again asked, with

increased earnestness and alarm. It was discussed in every journal and in every society. But it was a question more easy to be asked than to be answered. Our criminals must be kept and fed; the prisons would not contain all that were sent to them. Some such expedient as that of the ticket-of-leave system must be resorted to, and there, for the present, the matter rested. However, in consequence of the universal outcry, the police force was strengthened and put more on the alert; the practice of garrotting became less frequent: the alarm subsided, and London gradually resumed its old habits.

In the beginning of the year Mr. Lincoln, the president of the United States of America, launched a proclamation ordering the emancipation of all slaves within the ten rebel States, and declaring that such persons, if of suitable condition, should be received into the armed service of the United States, to garrison forts, positions, stations, and other places, and to man vessels. He based this act entirely on military considerations, which he believed to be warranted by the condition of the States, and solemnly invoked the considerate judgment of mankind, and the gracious favour of Almighty God. Lord Russell, on the receipt of a despatch from Lord Lyons, enclosing a copy of it, wrote him a letter to be communicated to the American government, in which he characterised the proclamation as a document of a very strange nature. He observed that it professed to emancipate all slaves in places where the government of the United States could not exercise any jurisdiction or make emancipation a reality, while it did not decree the emancipation of slaves in any States or parts of States occupied by the Federal troops, and subject to the jurisdiction of the government of the United States, and where therefore emancipation, if decreed, might be carried into effect. He urged that the proclamation made slavery at once legal and illegal, and made slaves punishable or rewardable for running away from their masters, according to the locality of the plantation or the loyalty of the State to which they belonged! Hence he argued that there was no declaration of a principle adverse to slavery in this proclamation; that it was a measure of war, and a measure of war of a very questionable kind. He concluded his communication by saying that, as President Lincoln had thrice appealed to the judgment of mankind, he ventured to say that he did not think it would or ought to satisfy the friends of abolition, who looked for total and impartial freedom for the slave, and not for vengeance on the slaveholder.

But whatever Earl Russell might say or think, the friends of abolition in England received the proclamation with demonstrations of sympathy and approval. They saw that, whatever the motive that dictated it, the effect would be the entire abolition of slavery if the Northern States triumphed. It was evidently impossible that if slavery were abolished in the ten Confederate States, it could hold its ground in the small portion of the Union to which the president's proclamation did not apply. Accordingly it soon became evident that the old anti-slavery spirit was not dead. Meetings were held in the largest available rooms of the metropolis, Liverpool, Manchester, and most of the chief towns of the kingdom. Before the hour of the meeting at Exeter Hall had arrived, it overflowed into the large rooms below, thence into the adjacent street, out of which a fourth meeting arose in the immediate neighbourhood. All these meetings, fermented with anti-slavery enthusiasm, were excited to a still higher pitch of effervescence by some ineffective attempts at a counter-demonstration in favour of the Southern States.

At the commencement of the session of 1863, the Prince of Wales took the oaths and his seat as a peer of the realm, and on Saturday, the 7th of March, the Princess Alexandra, his affianced bride, made her public entrance into the metropolis, on her way from Gravesend to Windsor Castle, where she was to be married to the Prince on the following Tuesday. It is needless to say that not only almost every Londoner was in the streets or in some place of vantage to view the procession, but that myriads, from all parts of England, flocked to the metropolis. Forty thousand pounds had been voted for the reception by the corporation of London; triumphal arches, splendidly decorated, had been erected along the line of procession; a single seat in a window was let for 30l.; the gas companies were unable to meet the demands made on them in connection with the illuminations by which the event was to be celebrated. The reception of the youthful princess, though respectful, was boisterous and tumultuous, and several people were crushed to death beneath the human deluge that rushed towards the carriage in which she was conveyed. These misfortunes were due partly to the enormous number of those who were anxious to catch a glimpse of the princess, but chiefly to the exceedingly bad arrangements made by the corporation of London, who, confiding in their own ability to maintain order, had stubbornly refused the offers that had been made them of the assistance of a body of police and of a military force. Public

opinion therefore loudly demanded the reform of the corporation; and the government, knowing how much that reform was needed, brought in a bill for the purpose. It was strenuously resisted by the civic authorities, and lost through non-compliance with the standing orders of the House of Commons. On the day fixed for the wedding, the marriage ceremony was performed with befitting pomp. But amongst all the persons who were present in that splendid and glittering throng, none attracted so much interest as the bereaved queen, who from a gallery just over the altar of St. George's Chapel looked down in her widow's weeds on the wedding of her first-born son.

The parliamentary proceedings of this year were devoid of public interest and historic importance, with the exception of the budget, introduced by Mr. Gladstone on the 15th of April. His speech was delivered under circumstances less favourable than those which had attended some of his previous financial addresses. Although it did not announce such great changes as those which were connected with the introduction of the French treaty; although it did not contain those ingenious disquisitions on the philosophy of finance which had given a special charm to his previous budget-speeches; none of them was more striking in the delivery, or produced a more powerful effect. The moment he concluded, the House, by one spontaneous and instinctive movement of approval, rose to express its admiration of the wonderful ability which, on a dry question of figures, could keep them for three hours hanging on the lips of the speaker.

A good deal of public indignation was expressed both in and out of parliament at the seizure of British ships by cruisers of the Northern States, especially at the behaviour of Captain Wilkes in the *Trent* affair, and at the manner in which his conduct had been sanctioned by the congress, the admiralty, and the people. Mr. Roebuck brought the matter before the House, relating in some detail the substance of a conversation between the French emperor and himself, in which the former stated not only that his feeling in favour of the recognition of the Southern States was the same as it had always been, but that it was now stronger than ever; that he was ready in all things to act with England; and that, more than in any other thing, he was ready to act with her as regarded America. Mr. Roebuck subsequently withdrew his motion, on an assurance from Lord Palmerston that the matter was receiving the careful consideration of the government.

We have already mentioned that since the elimination of parlia-

mentary reform from the place it had occupied in the queen's speeches, law reform was the only organic change which the government was prepared to propose. The measures that were brought forward in fulfilment of the pledge thus given were—a bill for the amendment of the bankruptcy laws, and another for the registration of titles to real estates. Sir R. Bethell, now become Lord Chancellor, and Lord Westbury introduced a measure for the consolidation of the statute law as contained in forty-four thick folio volumes of acts of parliament, many of which were obscure, obsolete, or contradictory. The work of examining, compressing, and digesting this prodigious mass of statutes had been already commenced, and the chancellor proposed to carry it forward more rapidly and effectually, and to attempt the consolidation of the common law, as contained in a vast number of recorded judicial decisions, commencing at the end of the reign of Edward II., and carried down to our own time. Of course such an immense mass of long and often conflicting judgments and opinions, contained in eleven or twelve hundred volumes of reports, the number of which was every day increasing, required an immense amount of attentive consideration. Lord Westbury proposed to appoint competent persons to examine, compare, revise, and expurgate these reports, and to remove from them all decisions that were obsolete or contradictory. For this purpose he suggested that they should be divided into three classes; the first extending to the Revolution of 1668 or the commencement of the reign of Queen Anne; the next to the end of the reign of George III.; and the last to be carried down to the period at which his bill was introduced. The measure was a vigorous and honest attempt to effect a reform of great necessity and importance; but was sure to encounter a strong opposition from the lawyers, who, though comparatively few in number in the Upper House, formed a very considerable proportion of the Lower. And this opposition was not likely to be balanced by any enthusiasm for a measure which, however useful, was not calculated to call forth much public sympathy or much zealous support.

A bill designed to put our volunteer force on a better-defined footing was a due recognition of the efforts that had been made to raise and keep up that body. The first volunteer rifle-corps was formed at Cheltenham in 1852, with the sanction of the queen, conveyed in a letter from Sir G. Grey to Earl Fitzhardinge just before the Russell administration retired. But the movement did not obtain much extension till the breaking-out of the war between France and Sardinia on the one hand, and Austria on the

other, in May, 1859. Two days after the Emperor Napoleon quitted Paris to put himself at the head of the French army, a notice was issued from the War Office sanctioning the formation of volunteer rifle and artillery corps under the provisions of the act Geo. III. chap. 54. From this time the movement spread rapidly, and volunteer corps were formed in the most considerable towns of the kingdom. The bill now introduced was carried, and led to a farther extension of the volunteer system.

A great part of the session was spent in discussions on the distress that prevailed in the manufacturing districts. Mr. Gladstone succeeded in carrying a Union Relief Acts Continuance Bill, allowing the application of money raised on the security of the rates to the purpose of paying wages to distressed operatives employed in the construction of roads and other public works. This was done at the earnest request of the workmen themselves, who petitioned the government to give them work rather than support them in idleness. The Prison Ministers Bill secured to Roman Catholic prisoners the attendance and ministrations of priests of the communion to which they belonged. Another measure, of which Lord Westbury was the author, enacted that the advowsons of no fewer than three hundred and twenty benefices in the patronage of the lord chancellor should be sold, and the proceeds devoted to the augmentation of the income of their incumbents. The government failed in an attempt to obtain a grant of money for the purchase of the buildings which had been erected for the reception of the articles sent to the International Exhibition of 1862.

The speech delivered at the prorogation of parliament was marked by the ominous absence of the clause in which the sovereign is generally made to announce to the legislature that her relations with foreign states are friendly and satisfactory. The cause of the omission was the danger of war that existed in many quarters. There was a possibility of our being drawn into taking part in the struggle going on in America; there was intelligence that hostilities with Japan were hourly expected to commence; our diplomatic relations with Brazil were interrupted; a war was being carried on in New Zealand against the Maories; and finally, a serious dispute had arisen between France and Austria respecting Poland, in which, if it should be carried farther, the strong public feeling that existed in this country in favour of that oppressed nationality would hardly allow us to remain neutral. At a later period complications arose between Denmark and Germany, which seemed at one time likely to involve this country.

On the day before Christmas, William Makepeace Thackeray was found calmly sleeping his last sleep. His was a mind that saw the ugly side of human nature, and depicted it with vividness and exaggeration, cynically placing it in the clearest light, yet with no cynical intent, for his nature over-flowed with benevolence and kindly humour. He painted vice with a trueness to life that had made him not a few enemies among those who fancied that they saw their own likeness in his delineations of character. The unexpected intelligence of his death, coming as it did a few days after the report of a speech he had delivered at the Charter-house, full of rich humour and right feeling, was received with universal regret. His funeral was strictly private; but there stood by the open grave to which the body of the great humourist was committed his friend and rival, Charles Dickens, as well as most of the literary celebrities of the day. Three years before, Thackeray and Dickens officiated as chief mourners at the interment of Douglas Jerrold; now one of them followed the other to his last resting-place, into which he also was shortly to descend.

It was very fortunate, considering the circumstances in which the inhabitants of the manufacturing districts as well as of other parts of the kingdom were placed by the civil war still raging in America, that the harvest of this year was abundant almost beyond precedent. The grain-crops were excellent both in quality and quantity, and there was a considerable diminution in the prices of almost all the necessaries of life, as well as a healthy impulse given to the industry and commerce of the country.

The year 1864 opened with very general apprehensions that the dispute which had arisen between Denmark on the one hand, and Prussia and Austria on the other, with regard to the Duchy of Schleswig-Holstein would end in a war, into which this country might be drawn. Earl Russell, as foreign secretary, was doing his best, by appealing to the faith of treaties, to induce the two Great Powers who were claiming Schleswig-Holstein in the name of Germany, to moderate their proceedings. Public opinion, however, expressed itself very decidedly against interference in a cause which England had no direct interest in maintaining, and she was consequently placed in the position of a warmly interested looker-on, while the Danes were heroically resisting the enormously superior forces which the two Great Powers brought into the field. But the sympathy of this country was shown by large private contributions for the relief and assistance of the Danish soldiers wounded in the unequal conflict.

Much of the time of parliament was occupied by debates on the question involved in this war. In the House of Lords the Earl of Derby strongly condemned the policy of the foreign secretary, which he characterised by two expressive words, long remembered and frequently repeated, "meddle and muddle." Englishmen generally knew little about the merits of the question at issue, but their sympathies were warmly excited by the spectacle of a little power like Denmark opposed to the armies of two great powers such as Prussia and Austria; and they were disposed to conclude, without much examination, that the small power must needs be right, and the two great powers wrong, as it was quite certain that whether right or wrong they could take whatever they chose to demand. The debates were much more remarkable for the vehemence with which they were conducted than for the light they threw on the merits of the question at issue.

They did not, however, prevent parliament from discussing some measures of considerable importance. Foremost among these, though attracting much less attention in this country than it deserved, was the Government Annuities Bill, introduced by Mr. Gladstone, and designed to provide, under the management and security of the government, a great general life and health insurance institution founded on sound principles, and which, it was hoped, would ultimately supplant the numberless sick and burial clubs and friendly societies instituted for the same object, many of which were based on thoroughly unsound principles, and were either actually bankrupt, or sure at some future and not very distant time to be placed in the position of being unable to meet the engagements into which they had entered with their members, and consequently endeavoured to stave off the inevitable day by inducing young members to become contributors. Great opposition was offered to the plan by the societies which it was designed to supersede.

An agitation for the abolition of capital punishment had been carried on for some time, and had now acquired so much strength that the government was induced to issue a royal commission to inquire into the nature and operation of the laws by which the punishment of death was appointed to be inflicted, as well as into the manner of its infliction, and to report whether it was desirable that any alteration should be made in these respects. The commission almost unanimously admitted that a change was required in the interest of the country and of justice, because in the present state of the law, juries, in spite of their oaths, frequently acquitted persons accused of murder not because proofs

of their guilt were wanting, but because there were extenuating circumstances which in their opinion rendered the punishment of death too severe. The commission also recommended that the penalty of death should be inflicted within the walls of the prison in the presence of a few spectators, in order to avoid the demoralising and disgusting scenes which often attended and disgraced public executions. These recommendations were subsequently adopted.

The subject of education was first brought under the attention of parliament during this session by the presentation of a report by the public-school commissioners, in which they stated that after a careful examination of Eton, Winchester, Westminster, St. Paul's, Merchant Taylors', Shrewsbury, Harrow, and Rugby, they had come to the conclusion that, while the course of study pursued in these schools was sound and valuable in its main element, it was wanting in breadth and flexibility—defects which in many cases destroyed and in all impaired its value. They reported that all these schools, though in different degrees, were too indulgent to idleness, or at least struggled ineffectually against it, and that consequently they sent out a large proportion of men of idle habits and empty, uncultivated minds. On the other hand, the commission spoke in terms of high praise of the discipline and moral training afforded in these establishments. Much that was contained in these reports was already known, but they had the effect of drawing more general attention to the condition of these institutions and of many others established on similar principles, and thus caused efforts to be made for their improvement, and especially for the cure of those removable evils whose existence this inquiry had revealed.

While the question of the education of the upper and middle classes of English society was being carefully investigated, that of the education of the working classes was not neglected. It was placed at this moment under the vigorous administration of Mr. Lowe, who was endeavouring to put the various religious communities of the country on a footing of perfect equality so far as related to the distribution of the grants of the education department of the privy council. He thus incurred much obloquy and hostility from the Conservative party, and a great effort was made to remove him from the position he occupied. Lord Robert Cecil moved, "That in the opinion of this House the mutilation of the reports of her Majesty's inspectors of schools, and the exclusion from them of statements and opinions adverse to the educational views entertained by the committee of council, while matters

favourable to them are admitted, are violations of the understanding under which the appointment of inspectors was originally sanctioned by parliament, and tend entirely to destroy the value of their reports." This resolution was carried by 101 to 93—numbers which were supposed to show that Lord Palmerston had not done all he might have done to save his colleague from this censure. Mr. Lowe at once resigned his office of vice-president of the education department, and procured the appointment of a committee, which fully exonerated him from all blame in the matter.

On Wednesday, the 13th of April, a remarkable debate took place on the second reading of Mr. Locke King's County Franchise Bill. Lord Palmerston strongly opposed the measure, delivering a speech against organic changes, which would have proceeded with a better grace from the back benches of the opposition than from the leader of the Liberal party. It was evident, however, that the premier did not carry with him the sympathies and support of his party; for when the House came to a division on the question of the second reading, the numbers were:

For the second reading	...	...	...	...	...	227
Against	..	...	...	...	...	254
Majority against the second reading						27

About a month later, Mr. Baines's bill for lowering the franchise in the boroughs, which, like the kindred reform proposed by Mr. Locke King, had frequently been before the House, was again brought under discussion. Mr. Gladstone seized this opportunity of showing that he did not share the opinion of the prime minister on the Reform question. Lord Palmerston had argued against that proposal on the ground that the people were not anxious for organic reforms, and were not agitating for innovations. Mr. Gladstone, with evident reference to this argument, said, "We are told that the working classes do not agitate; but is it desirable that we should wait till they do agitate? In my opinion, agitation by the working classes upon any political subject whatever is a thing not to be waited for, not to be made a condition previous to any parliamentary movement, but, on the contrary, to be deprecated, and, if possible, prevented, by wise and provident measures." Mr. Baines's motion was defeated by a majority of 272 against 216.

Two measures very advantageous to the working classes were adopted in the course of this session. The first, proposed by Lord Derby, enacted that in every railway leading into the metropolis provision should be made for the accommodation of the working

classes by cheap trains. This proposal was made mainly on the ground that the railways to which it applied had destroyed a large number of the habitations of the labouring classes, compelling them to reside at greater distances than before from the places at which they worked, and therefore it was only just that these railways should compensate those classes by affording them increased facilities for going to and returning from their work. The measure was accepted by the government, and was a great boon to those for whose benefit it was adopted, and a source of no small profit to the railway companies themselves, who have since found it to their interest greatly to extend the principle on which this enactment was based. The other boon to the working classes was an act for applying to several other trades the regulations already in force in factories relating to women and children working in them.

A vote of censure on the government for its conduct in reference to Denmark was carried in the House of Lords by a majority of nine; but a similar motion proposed by Mr. Disraeli in the Lower House was rejected by a majority of eighteen.

It is now time that we should notice one of the most remarkable agitations carried on in this or any other country. For some years societies had existed composed of persons pledged to abstain from the use of all intoxicating liquors, and who endeavoured to persuade others that these liquors, so far from being conducive to health, as had hitherto been generally supposed, were injurious to it. These opinions spread very rapidly in England, and especially in the manufacturing districts. In the United States of America they obtained such currency that Neal Dow, the mayor of Portland, U.S., succeeded in carrying a law forbidding the public sale of intoxicating drinks in the State of Maine, of which that town was the capital, and which is known by the title of the "Maine Liquor Law." This law was passed in 1851. In 1852 Nathaniel Card, a member of the Society of Friends, a pledged total abstainer, wrote to Mr. Neal Dow for information respecting the Maine Liquor Law. The reply that he received made him resolve to endeavour to establish in England an organization to agitate in favour of a similar measure. He succeeded in inducing Mr. Alderman Harvey, of Salford, Mr. James Simpson, of Fox Denton, Mr. J. Brotherton, M.P. for Salford, and Mr. Pope, a young barrister, to embark with him in the proposed agitation, and to form with some others a provisional committee. In February of the following year they opened offices in Manchester, and came before the public, with Mr. Walter C. Trevelyan as president, Mr. Harvey as chairman,

Mr. Pope, honorary secretary, and Mr. T. B. Barker, who has ever since been the soul of the agitation, as working secretary. The first step this committee took was to endeavour to unite those favourable to the movement throughout the country into a general council, and a great inaugural meeting was held, at which the following propositions were unanimously adopted as a basis for the agitation, and as indicating the character and scope of the movement:—

“1. That it is neither right nor politic for the State to afford legal protection and sanction to any traffic or system that tends to increase crime, to waste the national resources, to corrupt the social habits, and to destroy the health and lives of the people.

“2. That the traffic in intoxicating liquors as common beverages is inimical to the true interests of individuals, and destructive to the order and welfare of society, and ought therefore to be prohibited.

“3. That the history and results of all past legislation in regard to the liquor traffic abundantly prove that it is impossible satisfactorily to limit or regulate a system so essentially mischievous in its tendencies.

“4. That no considerations of private gain or public revenue can justify the upholding of a system so utterly wrong in principle, suicidal in policy, and disastrous in results, as the traffic in intoxicating liquors.

“5. That the legislative prohibition of the liquor traffic is perfectly compatible with rational liberty, and with all the claims of justice and legitimate commerce.

“6. That the legislative suppression of the liquor traffic would be highly conducive to the development of a progressive civilisation.

“7. That, rising above class, sectarian, or party considerations all good citizens should combine to procure an enactment prohibiting the sale of intoxicating beverages, as affording the most efficient aid in removing the appalling evils of intemperance.”

The methods adopted by this body to promulgate its principles and promote its objects were—

1. Lectures and public meetings.

2. Essays, tracts, placards, handbills, and periodical publications, including a weekly organ, the *Alliance News* (price 1d.).

3. Petitions and memorials to parliament, to government, to local authorities, and to religious bodies.

4. House-to-house canvasses, to ascertain the opinions of heads of families and other adult members

5. Conferences of electors, ministers of religion, Sunday-school teachers, the medical profession, and other important bodies.

Nothing in this agitation was more striking than the success which attended the meetings held by the Alliance. They were usually convened in the largest buildings in the cities and towns, and were frequently called and presided over by their mayors; they were freely open to all classes; discussion was invited, and resolutions embodying the principles and aims of the association were almost invariably affirmed by enthusiastic and unanimous votes.

In June, 1857, a conference of 400 clergymen and other Christian ministers of all denominations was held in the Town-hall, Manchester, and adopted the following declaration:—

“We, the undersigned ministers of the gospel, are convince by personal observation within our own sphere, and authentic testimony from beyond it, that the traffic in intoxicating liquors as drink for man is the immediate cause of most of the crime and pauperism, and much of the disease and insanity, that afflict the land; that everywhere, and in proportion to its prevalence, it deteriorates the moral character of the people, and is the chief outward obstruction to the progress of the gospel; that these are not its accidental attendants, but its natural fruits; that the benefit, if any, is very small in comparison with the bane; that all schemes of regulation and restriction, however good so far as they go, fall short of the nation's need and the nation's duty; and that, therefore, on the obvious principle of destroying the evil which cannot be controlled, the wisest course for those who fear God and regard man is to encourage legitimate efforts for the entire suppression of the trade, by the power of the national will, and through the force of a legislative enactment.” This declaration received the adhesion in writing of upwards of 3,000 ministers of religion.

In October, 1857, a draft of suggestions for a permissive prohibitory liquor law was adopted, and put into extensive circulation; in 1864 a bill founded on it was submitted to the House of Commons.

It provided that, on application of any district, the votes of the ratepayers shall be taken as to the propriety of adopting the provisions of the act; but that a majority of at least two-thirds of the votes taken shall be necessary in order to decide that question in the affirmative. The act itself would, when once

adopted in any district, prohibit within that district all traffic in intoxicating liquor for common purposes.

The first reading, though strongly opposed, was carried by a large majority, after a brief debate. The second reading, as expected, was defeated by a large majority, but forty members voted and paired off in favour of the bill.

In 1869, on the motion for a second reading of the bill, 94 voted or paired in its favour (an increase of 54).

The number of persons who were engaged in the agitation, the wealth and social position of many of them, the enormous funds which had been subscribed to support the Alliance, and the influence which it exercised in the election of members to parliament, obtained for its proposals a very attentive and respectful consideration. It was felt by many who were not prepared to go the full length of the Permissive Bill, that something needed to be done to reduce the immense amount of pauperism and crime distinctly traceable to drinking habits which the public-houses engendered. Others were of opinion that the principle of local control which the bill embodied was the only one calculated to contend with the gigantic evils which the liquor traffic was producing, and were willing that the bill should be read a second time in the hope that amendments would be introduced which would modify those features in it which they regarded as affording a too-violent remedy for an evil so justly complained of and so generally admitted. But the only distinct counter-plan was that of Mr. Bright, who suggested that the municipal council, or some committee of the municipal council in the various boroughs, should have the power of determining the number of licences for the sale of wine, spirits, or beer.*

The leaders of the Alliance, defeated but not disheartened, carried forward their agitation with renewed vigour. Taking advantage of the annual meetings of the Social Science Congress, they there obtained a full discussion of the subject in all its bearings. A committee of the Convocation of the province of Canterbury, to which the question was submitted, presented a report entirely in accordance with their views and opinions. They waited on candidates at contested elections, and gave their support, without reference to political sentiment, to those who promised to vote for the Permissive Bill, and in many instances turned the elections in their favour. They raised a guarantee fund, first of

* Mr. Bright's speech on this question is to be found in the printed collection of his speeches.

50,000^l., and afterwards of nearly 100,000^l.. In a word, they diffused information, and prosecuted their agitation with a degree of vigour and success which has been only rivalled by the great anti-corn-law agitation, and with legislative and other results which, though falling far short of their aims, have exercised a great and beneficial effect on the opinions and habits of the people of this country.

The English people have been generally regarded as a cold, calculating, phlegmatic, undemonstrative race. It has been said too, that, as a consequence of this temperament, their sympathies with the oppressed nationalities of the Continent, though unquestionably deep and sincere, have seldom been strongly manifested. But the visit of Garibaldi seemed to give the lie to the estimate that was usually formed of them, and to astonish even the most excitable of their continental neighbours. Never probably was a warmer reception given in England or any other country to the hero of a hundred fights than was awarded the Liberator of Italy. From his first landing at Southampton, or rather before his landing, he was assailed by the well-meant but often troublesome and intrusive homage of his admirers. But the enthusiasm swelled to the highest pitch, when, yielding to an almost resistless compulsion, he so far did violence to his own modest nature as to make a public entry into London. For four mortal hours did the carriage of the Duke of Sutherland struggle on from Waterloo station to Stafford House, stemming the human sea that overflowed every street through which he had to pass, amidst crowds composed of all classes, from the highest to the lowest, all vying with each other in demonstrations of respect and admiration for Garibaldi's character. He remained in London as the guest of the Duke of Sutherland, receiving the homage of the first nobility of the land, basking in the smiles of royalty, and followed wherever he went by shouts and acclamations. Pressing entreaties came from almost all the principal towns in England that he would honour each of them with a visit. He was perplexed by these invitations. He could not accept all, and could not select any without giving offence to the rest. The fatigue of receiving and answering addresses, and acknowledging the demonstrations that met him at every turn, began to tell on a constitution enfeebled by many hardships as well as by a wound he had recently received. He found it necessary to make his escape from an idolatry which was likely to prove seriously injurious to its object. Therefore, after a stay of about three weeks in England, the greater part of which was passed in

comparative seclusion, he returned to his home in the island of Caprera.

The session of the year 1865 commenced on Tuesday, the 7th of February. The distress in the manufacturing districts had so sensibly abated that the relief committees were able greatly to diminish the number of their meetings and the amount of aid distributed to the operatives. The war-clouds that had overhung Europe during a great part of the last year were dissipated, but hostilities on a small scale were still carried on by this country against Japan and the Maories of New Zealand. The royal message spoke in confident terms of the continuance of peace, announced a persistent neutrality as the settled policy of our government in reference to the civil war in the United States, and expressed approval of a proposed combination of our North American colonies in a single confederacy. The home measures to which it referred were unimportant; and on the question of parliamentary reform and of other organic changes it was silent. It was discussed as such a speech might be expected to be discussed by a parliament whose views it echoed with tolerable fidelity. The most strenuous reformers saw that it would be useless to propose the improvements they desired, in a parliament which had reached its last session. The great age that Lord Palmerston had attained rendered it certain that he could not continue much longer at the head of the government; and the eyes of all men were turned towards the parliament that would have to be elected in the course of this year, and which would probably commence its sittings under the auspices of a new premier.

The royal message was described by Lord Derby as the sort of speech likely to be addressed by an aged minister to a parliament whose dissolution was certain; so that the best thing its advisers could do was to find it some gentle occupation, and to take care that its dying movements should not be disturbed by any unnecessary excitement. Still, the notices of bills and motions given in the Lower House on the first days after its meeting were sufficiently numerous to find the House ample employment for a long session; but it was well understood that many of these notices were given rather in the hope of propitiating the constituencies than in the expectation of their being seriously discussed by the House.

But there were some practical and useful measures, which those who brought them forward fully intended to carry through. Among these may be mentioned the Union Charitable Bill,

brought in by Mr. Villiers, and read a second time on the 22nd of April, which established a better and more economical system of management in the different unions of the kingdom, made a more equal repartition of rates, and relieved the poor from grievous hardships, which up to this time the law of settlement had inflicted on them. There were parishes which belonged to a single proprietor, or to a small number of proprietors, who in order to prevent the men who laboured on their property from gaining a settlement in it, and acquiring a right to be supported from the rates, would not allow a single cottage to be erected within the parish; so that the poor drudges who tilled the ground were obliged to walk a distance of four or five miles to and from the place in which they laboured. It is true that this was an extreme case, which did not often occur, but there were many parishes in which there was an approach to this state of things; and of course it was not only a serious hardship to the peasants, but also shamefully unfair to the parishes which had not been benefited by their labour, but were compelled to support them in illness and old age. The bill of Mr. Villiers, instead of making each separate parish support its own paupers by rates equal throughout the parish, required each separate union of parishes to support its own paupers by rates equal throughout the union; thus making the area of relief coincident with the area of management, and putting an end to a great deal of litigation between different parishes. The measure did not go far enough, and did not wholly arrest the evil with which it dealt. It still left untouched differences of rates between contiguous unions. This might, indeed, be remedied to some extent by their enlargement, which for other reasons was desirable. However, the measure passed its second reading by a majority of 203 against 131. An amendment, brought forward by Mr. Bentineck, to facilitate, in certain cases, the alteration of the limits of existing unions, was opposed by Mr. Villiers, and rejected by the House. The bill eventually passed, and was the principal work of the session.

On the evening of Tuesday, the 28th of March, Mr. Dillwyn moved a resolution affirming that the state of the Irish Church was unsatisfactory and called for the early attention of her Majesty's government. The motion was opposed by Sir G. Grey, who stated that the government was not prepared to bring forward a measure for the disestablishment of the Irish Church. After Mr. Hardy had spoken at some length, and with great animation against the motion, Mr. Gladstone rose and entered into a full examination of the

question. He frankly admitted that the state of the Irish Church was unsatisfactory, but added that having regard to the difficulties which stood in the way of the removal of the anomalies it presented, and which he could not help recognising, he was not prepared to give his assent to the proposition "that this question calls for the early attention of the government." This declaration, to which subsequent events gave a peculiar significance, intimated that Mr. Gladstone, who had always been a firm and intelligent supporter of the Irish as well as the English church, believed that the days of the former were numbered, and that the government would at some future period be compelled to face the question of its disestablishment.

The budget of this year presented features which were all the more gratifying because they were exhibited in spite of the distress which, though rapidly diminishing, still existed in the manufacturing districts. The national expenditure for the financial year was estimated at 66,139,000*l.*; the revenue was expected to amount to 70,170,000*l.*; so that there would probably be a surplus of 4,031,000*l.* Of course with so large a balance, there was room for a considerable remission of taxation. Passing by some minor changes which it was proposed to make, we come to those which were most important. The duty on tea was to be reduced to sixpence in the pound; the income-tax to be lowered from sixpence to fourpence in the pound; the insurance duty, in conformity with a resolution which the House of Commons had passed on the 21st of March, was to be laid on all insured property at a uniform rate of one-and-ninepence, the shilling duty on all policies was to be replaced by a penny stamp, and a penny receipt stamp for the payment of the money. It was expected that these reductions would afford a relief of taxation amounting to 5,420,000*l.*, of which 3,778,000*l.* would take effect during the present financial year; leaving a surplus of 253,000*l.*

Mr. Baines again brought forward his measure for the reduction of the franchise, on Wednesday, the 3rd of May, before fourteen or fifteen members. When the subject again came before the House on the 8th of May, there was a large gathering of members, and everything betokened a close division. This was due not so much to any extraordinary interest taken in the question, as to the knowledge that this measure was likely to be the working question of the impending election. The debate on it was therefore of a very animated character. Sir G. Grey, speaking on the behalf of the government, maintained that he and his colleagues had fully

redeemed their reform pledges, but declined to give any promise as to the course which the government would take with regard to the measure in the next session. Mr. Gladstone sat by in silence. It was reported that his colleagues had extorted from him a promise not to speak on the question. But there was no truth in the statement. He had delivered his testimony on this subject during the preceding session in the most distinct manner, and it was not necessary that he should renew it now. On a division, the previous question, moved by Lord Elcho, was carried by 288 votes to 214.

During the remainder of the session the members of the House were speaking rather to their constituents than to the gentlemen, generally very few in number, who sat in the House. Early in the month of June they were putting forward their claims and opinions in addresses to the constituencies they represented, or which they hoped to represent in the next parliament. The House, therefore, was fitfully full and empty; members rushing down to the country by rail, and hurrying back again to the metropolis whenever any question in which their constituents took an interest was before the House. Bills were passed with even greater rapidity than is usual towards the end of a session.

One question, however, filled the House and brought on a severe party struggle. Lord-Chancellor Westbury had shown himself a most effective law-reformer. He had also shown himself, both before and after his appointment to his high office, but more especially since, a master of biting sarcasm, which told all the more severely on those against whom it was levelled in consequence of the soft and mellifluous tones in which it was delivered; so that his blows were not inaptly compared to those of a mailed hand covered with a velvet glove. His law reforms rendered him very unpopular with many members of his own profession, without procuring him much favour with the public. He had been led—in one instance by good-nature, and in another by carelessness—to allow a member of his family to make use of his patronage, in a manner calculated to damage the reputation of his high office and lower his personal character. Unfortunately the charges made against him, instead of undergoing a calm and judicial investigation, were considered by the House of Commons, as such matters too frequently are, not so much with a desire to vindicate the character of public men, as with the purpose of inflicting a blow on the party and the government to which the accused person belonged. That he had been guilty of reprehensible laxity there can be no doubt. But this

might to a certain extent be excused in consideration of the immense demand which the duties of his high office must make on its holder, as well as the special and most honourable labours which Lord Westbury had undertaken. But even if his conduct had been less excusable, the manner of his condemnation was such as reasonable men could hardly approve.

The defence offered on behalf of the Chancellor was received, not with the demeanour of men engaged in the calm and judicial examination of an important question very seriously affecting the character of a person in high office, but with continual interruption, shouts of derisive laughter, and loud cries for a division. It was evident that a large portion of the members had come up not to judge, but to condemn or acquit. If the division had taken place a week earlier, the supporters of the ministry would have been in the majority, and Lord Westbury would have been absolved; as it was, the Conservative whip had been more successful than the Liberal whip, or rather, perhaps, the desire to brand Lord Westbury was stronger than the desire to clear him, and it was evident that the vote of censure would be carried. Lord Palmerston endeavoured, by moving an adjournment, to evade the blow, but the motion was rejected by 177 voices to 163. The prime minister adroitly accepted the division as representing the feeling of the House with regard to Mr. Bouverie's motion, and thus avoided a still more signal defeat.

Lord Palmerston did not hesitate to declare that in his opinion Lord Westbury had been unfairly dealt with. It still remained to be seen in what manner the Chancellor would treat the censure of the Lower House. It was announced that his statement would be made on Wednesday, the 5th of July. On the evening of that day Lord Westbury took his seat as usual on the woolsack, and there was a very large concourse both of peers and of strangers to hear the expected explanations. When Lord Westbury rose he was listened to with a deep and respectful attention, which was maintained throughout his speech. He explained that he had desired to resign his high functions from the time that the charges, which had drawn down on him the censure of the House of Commons, had been first brought forward, because he thought that it was not fit that a person on whose conduct any shadow of suspicion rested should retain the high office that he held, but that his intention had been combated by Lord Palmerston, who pointed out that if such a precedent were once given, the Lord Chancellor might be driven from office by any malicious or un-

scrupulous person who might think proper to bring a charge against him. He said that he had yielded to these considerations, and continued to hold his office till yesterday.

It was generally felt that nothing he had done in his office, and he had effected much, better became him, than his manner of leaving it; and that he had thus fully atoned for the errors into which he had fallen.

At twelve o'clock on the day following this scene, parliament was prorogued. Much had been said for months past of "the great Conservative reaction," and some isolated Conservative victories were pointed to in proof of its reality. The result of the general election, however, did not bear out these assertions; it produced a considerable change in the *personnel* of the House of Commons: one hundred and eighty members of the old parliament were replaced by the same number of new members. The city of London sent four Liberals; Westminster returned Mr. Mill and Lord Grosvenor, the former being at the head of the poll. At Birmingham, Mr. Bright denounced the ministry as having climbed into office under the pretence of devotion to parliamentary reform, and having afterwards violated all its pledges. He did not hesitate to declare that its chiefs had purposely betrayed the cause they undertook to defend, and that its less eminent members had tamely acquiesced in that betrayal. But while thus severe on the government, he did not spare the leader of the opposition. He described Mr. Disraeli as one who would have been a statesman if his powers had been directed by an ennobling principle or idea, but who unhappily preferred a temporary and worthless distinction, as the head of a decaying party fighting for impossible ends, to the priceless memories of services rendered to his country and to freedom, on which only, in our age, an enduring fame could be built up.

Of all elections of this period, the one which excited the most intense interest was that for the university of Oxford. Mr. Gladstone was opposed by Mr. Hardy, and preparations had been made for bringing him forward as candidate for South Lancashire. His defeat at Oxford was as ardently desired by the Liberal party as by the most vehement of the Oxford Conservatives. They felt that as long as he continued to represent the university, he would be subject to anti-liberal influences. But if he should become member for South Lancashire, the influences to which he would be exposed would be of a directly contrary nature. Hitherto, they said, he has been held back; now he will be urged forward. These hopes were not disappointed. As soon as it became evident that

victory at Oxford was hopeless, Mr. Gladstone hastened down to Lancashire, and lost no time in presenting himself as a candidate for the southern division of that populous and important county. The contest, however, was severe. Mr. Gladstone stood third on the poll, and was only returned by a small majority over the third Conservative candidate.

But while the Liberal party gained the free guidance of an earnest and highly able leader, that gain had been to a great extent counterbalanced by the loss of one of its ablest and purest champions. Few events have ever occurred in this country that have caused a deeper or more wide-spread sorrow than the death of Richard Cobden, which happened in the earlier part of this year. He was a victim to his over-anxious desire to fulfil his public duties. He came to Rochdale in the month of November, 1864, in order to give his constituents an account of his stewardship during the past session. He was suffering from a bronchial affection which rendered it in the highest degree dangerous for him to speak at all, or even to visit at that time of the year a place the climate of which is so inclement as that of Rochdale. Nevertheless he went, and addressed a very large and crowded meeting at great length and with all his usual earnestness. From the effects of that exertion he never recovered. The next spring he was recommended by his medical advisers not to go to London till the weather had become genial and settled, and he so far yielded to their advice as to remain at home till near the end of March; but he was nervously anxious to show his constituents that he was not negligent of his duty as their representative. This feeling impelled him to take his seat in the House of Commons at as early a period as possible. The day on which he went up to London happened unfortunately to be, perhaps, the very coldest of the year. He was exposed to the blast of a biting east wind, which produced a severe and immediate aggravation of his bronchial symptoms, under which he rapidly sank. It is scarcely possible for those who have not enjoyed the privilege of personal communication with this great man to understand the nature of that power which he exercised over his contemporaries, and of which he made so magnificent a use for the benefit of his fellow-men. His vast services were in no small degree due to the fascination which his character and demeanour enabled him to exercise over individuals in private conversation, and over multitudes by his speeches. It had its basis in a clear understanding, and a thoroughly good heart combined with a character of extraordinary energy and determination. Hence there was

nothing artistic or artificial in his speeches. His art was not to conceal art, for he had no art to conceal; all with him was natural and unaffected. His speeches had no formal exordium or peroration. He perhaps never stood up to address any assembly without an earnest purpose in addressing it. He said what he thought and felt with regard to the subject on which he spoke; and when he had finished what he had to say on it he sat down. The feeling which occupied and might almost be said to have engrossed his mind, was a desire to benefit his fellow-creatures, and especially his fellow-countrymen; for though eminently cosmopolitan, he was no less eminently patriotic. The author of this work well remembers how in the last conversation he ever had with him, Mr. Cobden expatiated with warm satisfaction on the great increase that had taken place in the number of persons employed in the printing and publication of newspapers since the abolition of the stamp and paper duties, which he had so powerfully helped to remove, and the especial gratification with which he dwelt on the fact that this increase in the number of persons employed had been accompanied by a great rise in the salaries by which their labour was remunerated. The reader of this work has already enjoyed an opportunity of perusing the noble tribute of just acknowledgment paid to his services in the cause of free-trade by Sir R. Peel. A still more heartfelt and earnest tribute was paid to his memory by his intimate private friend and political associate, Mr. Bright, who was persuaded so far to do violence to his own feelings and wishes as to go down to the House of Commons on the evening on which it was understood that Lord Palmerston and Mr. Disraeli would refer to the loss which the legislature and the country had suffered by the death of Mr. Cobden. After the leaders on both sides of the House had warmly eulogised the deceased statesman, all eyes were naturally turned to the bench occupied by his friend and political ally; and Mr. Bright, endeavouring to master the emotions by which he was agitated, thus responded to the feeling of the House:—

“Sir, the present moment is too near the scene in which I have witnessed the passing away of one of the kindest and purest spirits that ever breathed, for me to be able to express what I feel; but I hope to be able to have some other opportunity of pointing out to some portion of his countrymen the lesson which is to be gathered from the life of him who has passed away. After a close friendship of many years, I never knew how much I loved him till I lost him.” And the strong firm-set man sat down and wept. The tears he shed were worthy of him who dropped them, and of him whose

remembrance drew them forth. The long and unbroken friendship of these two distinguished men was highly honourable not only to them but to the age they illustrated. Many attempts were made to create jealousies and ill-feelings between them, by extolling one at the expense of the other; but they all failed to cast a shade on the pure and disinterested friendship which bound them together.

The death of Cobden was followed in less than a fortnight by the assassination of President Lincoln, shot in his private box at Lord's Theatre, Washington, by an actor named Booth.

Later in the year another death occurred under very different circumstances. The premier was within a few days of the completion of the eighty-first year of his age, and though he suffered from occasional attacks of gout, he still maintained all the strength and sprightliness of his character, and fulfilled the duties of his position with that tact and good humour which had always distinguished him, undergoing an amount of labour which at his age seemed almost miraculous. Except when prevented by the gout, or kept away by other business, he was almost always in his place in the House of Commons from the commencement to the close even of its most protracted sittings. During the autumn he shewed symptoms of failing health, but they were not of a nature to cause serious uneasiness. On Thursday, October 19th, he was confined to his bed by what seemed a slight cold, caught through riding imprudently in an open carriage without an overcoat. On the Monday following it was rumoured that his indisposition had taken a serious turn; but the report was promptly contradicted. On the morning of the next day a bulletin was issued, stating that he was improving steadily; but in the afternoon it was announced that he had become worse; and on the following morning that he was gradually sinking. About eleven o'clock he expired, after having for nearly forty years occupied a very prominent and important position in this country, and having presided over its destinies after having passed the fourscore years allotted by the Psalmist to man. Arrangements were made for his interment in the vault belonging to the family in the Romsey Abbey Church, but they were set aside by the special desire of the Queen, in order that his remains might rest in the ancient Abbey of Westminster. Almost every journal and public man in the country took some opportunity of eulogising the deceased premier. As to the appointment of his successor, there could be no doubt. Earl Russell's age, his great services, his high reputation, his honourable character, gave him irresistible claims to the vacant place. Equally of course, Mr. Gladstone became leader of the ministry in the House of Commons.

For a long time past the relations between the employers of labour and the labouring classes had been becoming more and more unsatisfactory, and in this year they were at length brought to an issue in one great and important branch of the national industry—the iron trade. The demand had long been growing less, the profits of the trade had greatly diminished, and many iron-masters had failed, owing, as was alleged, to the pressure of foreign competition. Under these circumstances, the masters determined on a reduction of wages throughout the iron districts. Of course it caused much discontent, and numerous meetings of the working men were held, at which the matter was discussed. The result of their deliberations was that the South Staffordshire iron-workers accepted the conditions proposed by the masters, while the North Staffordshire men refused to submit to them. The latter, therefore, struck, and were supported in their strike by the contributions of South Staffordshire men. The masters at once saw that the North Staffordshire men thus aided would probably carry their point, and that then the South Staffordshire masters would have a demand made on them for a rise of wages, and would be compelled to yield in their turn. The masters therefore determined to meet the turn-out of the north by a lock-out in the south. Then came proposals for arbitration; conferences between masters and men; unsuccessful attempts at arbitration under the auspices of Lord Lichfield, the lord-lieutenant of the county; emigration to the United States, Australia, and New Zealand. Meanwhile 70,000 men were out of employment, and 100,000*l.* a week which had been paid in wages was diverted into other channels. The masters therefore invited the men to return to their work for the present, promising to leave the amount of wages to be settled afterwards by arbitration. The men insisted that the arbitration should precede their return to work. In such a contest the masters had the advantage which belongs to more cultivated intelligence and to the comparative smallness of their numbers, which facilitated combination. But the market price of labour is regulated by the laws of demand and supply, and is very little influenced either by strikes or lock-outs. The masters, as appears by the result, had miscalculated it, and were forced to yield, first at Newcastle, then in Cleveland; at length the Staffordshire masters found themselves left to fight their battle alone. The South Staffordshire masters yielded; and at last the North Staffordshire masters followed their example; and so the dispute ended, not without heavy loss to both parties, producing a greater willingness in both to submit their differences

to arbitration, instead of settling them by the clumsy expedients of strikes and lock-outs.

Before the general election was well over, the country was alarmed by the intelligence that a disease of the ox-tribe known on the Continent by the name of the steppe-murrain, or rinderpest, had appeared in this country. It was first brought into England by some cattle imported from Holland; and it spread rapidly. Attention was at once directed to the means to be adopted for repressing its ravages. The London cowkeepers met in the end of July to establish a society intended to prevent the spread of the infection. The government took up the matter, and on the 2nd of August the privy council issued descriptions of the symptoms of the disease, and directions respecting the precautions to be adopted in order to prevent it from spreading. It was stated that when the same complaint visited England a hundred and twenty years before, no fewer than 40,000 cattle perished by it, and there seemed to be strong reasons for apprehending that this time it would be at least equally fatal. Towards the end of October it was announced that the cattle attacked with the disease during the past week, so far as they had come under the notice of the inspectors, were 1873, and that during the short time that had elapsed since the first outbreak of the pest the whole number attacked by it was 17,673, of which 6866 had been killed, 7914 had died, 2047 were still under treatment, and 848 had recovered. Commissioners, who had been appointed to inquire into the origin, nature, and extent of the disease, recommended by a majority that for a limited time all movements of cattle from one place to another should be stopped; and they gave their opinion that if this regulation were enforced, the murrain must speedily disappear, but that nothing short of this would eradicate the evil. Notwithstanding the adoption of these recommendations the disease continued to spread, and before the end of the year, 73,559 had been attacked, out of which 55,422 had died or been killed. The strong measures that had been taken were, however, beginning to tell on it, and the number of cases was steadily diminishing. In other respects the condition of the country was prosperous and promising in spite of a somewhat unfavourable harvest. Peace and order had prevailed throughout the year, and everything betokened the continuance of these blessings.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE REFORM BILL OF 1867.

THE animosity that had been excited in America by the depredations of the Alabama, and other privateers fitted out in English ports, was not long in manifesting itself. In the beginning of the year 1866 a motion to the following effect was submitted to the Senate of the United States: "Whereas England refuses to settle the Alabama claims, the president is requested to withdraw the American minister from England and issue a proclamation of national non-intercourse." The resolution was rejected by a majority of more than two to one; but the fact that it had been seriously entertained was calculated to awaken fears that the question would not be considered in America in a spirit calculated to lead to a satisfactory settlement of the differences between the two nations.

While the two governments were involved in the discussion of this unhappy difference, a noble-minded American was showing to both countries "a more excellent way." Mr. Peabody, a native of the United States, who had long resided in England, where he had realized a vast fortune, determined to devote a large portion of it to the benefit of the country in which he had thus prospered. In the month of March, 1862, he placed in the hands of trustees the sum of 150,000*l.* for the benefit of the poor of the metropolis, and in the beginning of the year following, he added a second donation of 100,000*l.* In his letter, conveying to them an intimation of his purpose, he stated that there were some fundamental principles from which it was his solemn injunction that they should never under any circumstances depart. First and foremost, there was the limitation of its uses absolutely and exclusively to such purposes as might be calculated directly to ameliorate the condition or augment the comforts of the poor who, either by birth or established

residence, formed a recognised portion of the population of London. Secondly, that there should be a rigid exclusion from the management of this fund of any influences calculated to impart to it a character either sectarian as regarded religion, or exclusive in relation to local or party politics. In addition to these essential conditions, he suggested that a portion of the fund might be applied to the construction of improved dwellings for the poor and to the erection of school-houses, which should be well supplied with books, periodicals, and newspapers. He further desired his trustees to publish annually in the London newspapers, during the month of February, reports of the progress of the buildings, of the receipts and expenditure connected with them, and of the general management of the funds entrusted to them. A moderate rent was to be paid by the tenants of the buildings, by which a large and progressively increasing income would be furnished, to be applied to the improvement of the dwellings of the working classes of the metropolis and its immediate vicinity. At the end of the year 1868, Mr. Peabody added another 100,000*l.*; thus raising the amount of his donations to the poor of this country to 350,000*l.*, besides gifts amounting in all to two million dollars, which were made by him to form an education fund for the people of America.

At the commencement of the year, the *London Gazette* announced that a treaty, somewhat similar in its provisions to that which had been entered into with France, had been concluded with Austria. Thus the principles of Cobden and Bright were steadily gaining ground; the commerce of England was being greatly extended, not only without injury to other nations, but greatly to their advantage.

The formal opening of the new parliament took place on the 1st of February, and on Tuesday, the 6th of that month, the queen, for the first time since the death of her husband, opened the session in person. The weather was propitious. A very great multitude congregated to witness the procession, and gave the queen a very cordial reception. There were some deviations from the ordinary ceremonial. The old gilded state carriage was replaced by one equally handsome, but of more modern build. The royal robes were laid on the chair of state, but the queen did not wear them, and the speech was read by the lord chancellor. It was stated at the time that this procedure was in accordance with precedents afforded by Queen Elizabeth. The speech contained the following reference to the question of parliamentary reform:—

“I have directed that information should be procured in

reference to the rights of voting in the election of members to serve in parliament for counties, cities, and boroughs. When that information is complete, the attention of parliament will be called to the result thus obtained, with a view to such an improvement in the laws which regulate the rights of voting in the election of members of the House of Commons, as may tend to strengthen our free institutions, and conduce to the public welfare."

The subjects which chiefly occupied the attention of parliament at its first meeting were the cattle-plague, the conduct of Governor Eyre, of Jamaica, and the efforts that had been made to obtain the liberation of Consul Cameron and other Europeans who had for some time been kept in captivity by the King of Abyssinia, and who, it was feared, would not be released unless very strong measures were adopted by the British government. Of all these questions, that relating to the cattle-plague was the most pressing; for all the efforts hitherto made to repress it had proved ineffectual, and it was necessary that parliament should be appealed to, to grant the powers required to put an end to its ravages.

Amidst the manifold questions which engaged the attention of parliament during this session, Mr. Gladstone's quality as leader of the House was fully tried. Like Lord Palmerston he generally remained in the House from the commencement of the sittings to the close of them, however late the hour of adjournment might be. But he did not, like him, slumber during the greater part of the sittings; on the contrary, he listened attentively to every speaker answered fully every question, spoke on every subject, and exhibited a sensitive and conscientious anxiety to discharge his functions as leader of the House, which his friends feared would soon disable him from the performance of the responsible duties that devolved on him.

If the ministry had looked merely to its own stability, or to its chances of retention of office, it would not have introduced a reform bill during the first session of a parliament whose members were still smarting under the recollection of the contests in which they had been engaged, the dangers they had run, the expenses they had incurred, and the demands on their purses they had still to meet, and who might therefore be expected to regard with little favour a measure which would speedily send them back to their constituents, and compel them again to run the risks and incur the expenses that were so fresh in their remembrance. The proposition of the government was therefore regarded with great disfavour by

many supporters of the administration. Nor were there wanting among their colleagues men who, having been introduced into the cabinet by Lord Palmerston, and sharing his feelings with regard to the question of reform, acknowledged, with regret, that it was a question the settlement of which could not be much longer delayed, but wished that it should not be pressed in the first session of the new parliament. Under ordinary circumstances Lord Russell and Mr. Gladstone would have yielded to such considerations. But they felt, that the question had already been hung up too long; that the delay which had occurred with regard to it was damaging our institutions, the character of our public men, and the House of Commons itself; and therefore that it was not the time to listen to considerations of prudence or expediency, but to show the country that there were public men who valued consistency more than place, and were determined, come of it what might, to redeem their pledges in reference to this great and long-delayed question.

The measure was submitted to the House of Commons on Tuesday, March 13th, by Mr. Gladstone. The government proposed to reduce the county franchise from 50*l.* to 14*l.*, but occupation of property of the value of less than 50*l.* was to include a house as well as land, and the annual value of the house was not to be less than 7*l.* Copyholders and leaseholders were to be placed on the same footing as forty-shilling freeholders. A man having 50*l.* in the bank might claim a vote either for a county or a borough. Compound householders were to have the franchise in boroughs, and tenants of separate parts of a house, and lodgers paying 10*l.* a year for their lodgings. The borough franchise was to be lowered from 10*l.* to 7*l.* The question of a redistribution of seats was not dealt with by the bill, and Mr. Gladstone refused to pledge himself absolutely that the government would introduce a measure on that important part of the subject even in the next session. After a debate which was adjourned till the following day, leave was given to bring in the bill, and it was read a first time.

The bill bore on its surface marks of the divided character of the cabinet by which it had been adopted. Though a good and honest measure, it was evidently a compromise. It was impossible to suppose that Earl Russell and Mr. Gladstone, after their previous declarations on the subject, would have willingly proposed a 14*l.* franchise in the counties, or a 7*l.* franchise in the towns. Such proposals were not calculated to rouse in the constituencies of the empire an enthusiasm like that which the Reform Bill of 1831 awakened, or even such a feeling as would have

reconciled the members of the new parliament to a measure which would have the effect of speedily sending them back to their constituents. But, mild and moderate as the measure was, it was too strong for a section of the Liberal party, which did not hesitate, even before the bill was read a first time, and while the question of its introduction was being debated, to declare its uncompromising hostility to it. That party was described and had a name given to it by Mr. Bright, which has become historical. Speaking of Mr. Horsman, who with Mr. Lowe had distinguished himself by the vehemence of his opposition to the bill, Mr. Bright said, "The right honourable gentleman is the first of the new party who has expressed his great grief, who has retired into what may be called his political Cave of Adullam, and he has called about him every one that was in distress and every one that was discontented. The right honourable gentleman has been long anxious to form a party in this House. There is scarcely any one on this side of the House who is able to address the House with effect, or to take much part in our debates, whom he has not tried to bring over to his party or cabal; and at last the right honourable gentleman has succeeded in hooking the right honourable gentleman the member for Calne. I know there was an opinion expressed many years ago by a member of the treasury bench and of the cabinet, that two men would make a party. When a party is formed of two men so amiable, so discreet, as the two right honourable gentlemen, we may hope to see, for the first time in parliament, a party perfectly harmonious and distinguished by mutual and unbroken trust. But there is one difficulty which it is impossible to remove. This party of two reminds me of the Scotch terrier, which was so covered with hair that you could not tell which was the head and which was the tail of it."

The party thus humorously depicted and named proved to be both more numerous and more formidable than Mr. Bright's description of it gave reason to expect. The Cave, as it was henceforth called, became the retreat of a considerable number of Whigs, who, either from dislike to reform, or dread of a new election, were anxious to get rid of the bill. Foremost among these was the Right Honourable Robert Lowe, who, though he had recently been a member of the cabinet which had ridden into office on the ground of its supposed zeal for parliamentary reform, employed against the bill introduced by his former colleagues—with great ability and no little originality of illustration—the worn-out arguments which had been so repeatedly but vainly urged in

1831 and 1832 by Sir C. Wetherell, Mr. Croker, and those who joined them in withstanding the great Reform Bill. The existence of this party, and the nature of the speeches delivered by those who composed it, determined the Conservative leaders to take a course on which they probably would not otherwise have ventured, and to endeavour to defeat the very moderate attempt made by the government to settle a question so often raised and so often deferred. They summoned a meeting of their supporters to consider the manner in which the ministerial proposal should be dealt with. The Earl of Derby was prevented from attending by an attack of illness; but an address was delivered by Mr. Disraeli, which is said to have roused the enthusiasm of his followers; and it was resolved that the bill should be strenuously resisted. But as the Conservative party, though strong, was numerically inferior to that which supported the government, it seemed likely that their opposition to the bill would have no other effect than that of delaying its progress and perhaps extorting some concessions from the government. It was, therefore, to them a matter of great satisfaction, and of no small dismay to the government, when Earl Grosvenor, eldest son of the Marquis of Westminster, and usually a steady supporter of ministers, gave notice that on the question of the second reading he would propose an amendment to the effect that it would be inexpedient to discuss any bill for the reduction of the franchise until the House should have before it the entire scheme contemplated by the government. This announcement showed the Palmorstonian Whigs were ready to combine with the Conservatives to defer again the consideration of this often-introduced and long-delayed measure. And it soon became evident that the notice was instigated partly by a natural desire on the part of the representatives of small boroughs to know whether the towns by which they were sent were to be disfranchised or not, partly by a jealousy of the influence which the views of Mr. Bright and his party were supposed to have exercised over the decisions of the cabinet, but still more by the fear that the extension of the franchise, if granted, would be used as a means of obtaining a much larger measure of redistribution than the old Whig party was willing to agree to. The combination thus formed could be defeated by making concessions calculated to lower the character of the government. Therefore on the night before the commencement of the Easter recess, in moving that the House at its rising should adjourn to the 9th of April, Mr. Gladstone gave the following explanations:—

"I will now state the views of the government with regard to certain motions on the paper. With regard to the motion of the member for Bridgewater, that it is not expedient to go into the Franchise Bill until the House has before it the bill for the redistribution of seats, the government will announce to the House the nature of their proposal as to the redistribution of seats, that the question may be dealt with by parliament. After the second reading of the Franchise Bill, and before it is committed, they will be prepared to state their intentions with respect to the franchise of Scotland and Ireland, and the question connected with the redistribution of seats. They will be put in the form of bills, and laid before the House for the purpose of giving it information. After that, they propose to proceed with the Franchise Bill for England and Wales until its fate is determined. As for the motion of the noble earl opposite (Grosvenor), it is their intention to resist it, because they regard it, as far as they can judge, as a motion of want of confidence in the administration."

Earl Grosvenor, who happened at the moment to be sitting on the opposition benches, rose and inquired whether Mr. Gladstone would really persist in giving no information until after the second reading. Mr. Gladstone, in a resolute tone, answered, "Unquestionably."

At a later period of the evening Mr. Gladstone availed himself of the opportunity afforded by a discussion on electoral statistics to appeal to the House, and through it to the country, to admit to the franchise the 400,000 men on whom the bill proposed to confer it. His speech was in fact a call on those to whom the bill gave votes, and on those who thought them entitled to the franchise, to come forward and give their support to the government measure during the Easter holidays.

The appeal met with a tolerable hearty response. The friends of the government worked hard out of doors from the time that the House rose till the period of its reassembling. At Birmingham, Mr. Bright plainly told a large meeting that their representation in the House of Commons was a sham and a farce; and that if they wanted an effective Reform Bill they must take the matter into their own hands, and bring a strong pressure from without to bear on the legislature. Mr. Gladstone delivered two addresses at Liverpool on the same subject, in which he declared that he and his colleagues were determined to stand or fall by their Franchise Bill; that they had crossed the Rubicon, and burnt their ships.

On Thursday, the 12th of April, the question of the second reading of the bill was brought forward by Mr. Gladstone. Earl Grosvenor then moved the amendment of which he had given notice. The question raised by the Franchise Bill had been so often discussed that it was hardly to be expected that anything new could be said on the subject. Men's thoughts were therefore turned rather to the division than to the debate. It was generally expected that, notwithstanding the combination of parties by which the amendment was supported, the government would triumph; but as the debate dragged on night after night, rumour continually diminished the expected majority. At length, about three in the morning of Saturday, the 28th of April, the division came off. A large crowd watched in Westminster Hall to know the result. The numbers were announced to be—

For the amendment	...	...	...	...	...	313
Against	...	...	...	...	...	318
Majority in favour of the government						5

The bill was then read a second time.

This division was one of the largest, perhaps, the very largest, that had ever occurred. Out of 658 members, including the Speaker, 631 had voted. The excitement in the House was unparalleled, and broke forth in loud shouts of triumph, not from the conquering ministerialists, but from the Conservatives and the party of the Cave. The opposition had good grounds for their exultation, and the ministerialists for their depression: for the victory of the government was worse than a defeat. Their majority was so small as hardly to leave them a prospect of carrying the measure; and yet, having a majority they were obliged, after all the pledges they had given, to proceed with the bill, to dissolve, or to resign. Intense interest was felt to know which of these courses they would adopt, and at the time of the commencement of business on Monday afternoon the House was crowded, in anticipation of a statement which Mr. Gladstone had announced that he intended to make. He rose shortly before five o'clock, and informed the House that the government would proceed with the bill; that on Monday evening next leave would be asked to introduce the Redistribution of Seats Bill; that bills for Scotland and Ireland would be brought in on the same evening, and would be proceeded with at the same time as the Franchise Bill. The House received these announcements in silence. The decisive battle was still to be fought.

On Monday, the 7th of May, the whole of the government plan of reform was laid before the House. Besides the Franchise Bill, the bill for the redistribution of seats and the Scotch and Irish bills were brought forward. The Redistribution Bill did not wholly deprive any borough of its franchise, and did not alter the number of members in the House of Commons; but by taking one member from some small boroughs that had hitherto sent two representatives to parliament, and by grouping small boroughs together, it reduced the number of members by forty-nine. Of the seats thus obtained it gave twenty-six to counties, or to the divisions or subdivisions of counties, and an additional member each to Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, and Salford. It divided the borough of Tower Hamlets, giving two members to each of its divisions. It made Chelsea and Kensington a borough returning two members, and gave a member each to Burnley, Staleybridge, Gravesend, Hartlepool, Middlesborough, Dewsbury, and the University of London. The remaining seven seats were allotted to Scotland and Ireland. At the same time Mr. Gladstone announced that the Queen would not be advised by the present government to prorogue parliament until these measures should have become law. On Monday, May 14th, the Redistribution Bill was read a second time, in a House consisting of some nine or ten members. Mr. Gladstone announced at the close of the debate, in reply to a question put by Sir S. Northcote, that he would, on behalf of the government, accede to a proposition to combine the Franchise and Redistribution Bills, and submit them to one committee on that day fortnight. Accordingly, at the specified time the two bills were committed together, Mr. Gladstone proposing, and the committee accepting, some amendments which were required in order to effect their amalgamation. We will not weary our readers by tracing the progress of the bill through committee; suffice it to say, that after a defeat on a motion of Sir R. Knightley, that "it be an instruction to the committee that they have power to make provision for the better prevention of bribery and corruption," the measure floated on till Monday, 18th of June, when the clause was reached which enacted a rental franchise in boroughs. Lord Dunkellin, usually a supporter of the government, moved as an amendment on this clause that rating should be substituted for rental, on the ground that this alteration would oppose an insurmountable "barrier to universal suffrage," while it would admit the best-qualified of the working class to the franchise. On this motion the House divided, and the numbers were:—

For the amendment	...	...	...	...	...	...	315
Against	...	...	...	...	...	...	304
Majority against the government							11

The announcement of these numbers was received by the Opposition and the Cave with shouts even more deafening than those which had hailed the division on the second reading.

The absence of the queen in Scotland, caused some days to elapse before the determination of the cabinet could be known. At length, on Tuesday, June the 26th, it was announced in both Houses that ministers had determined to resign; that the queen, after urging some objections, had acquiesced in the propriety of their decision; that they only held office till their successors could be appointed. In the House of Commons Mr. Gladstone gave the following statement of the reasons which had determined him and his colleagues to tender their resignations:—

“The question before the government was, whether they ought to resign their offices, or whether they should accept the vote that had been come to, and endeavour to adapt it to the framework of their measure of reform. When we came to examine the effect of the motion, we were struck with the difficulty of adopting any form of rating franchise that would express the scale of suffrage which we had laid down as the basis of our measure. We found that a six-pound rating franchise would operate to create a great divergence of franchise in boroughs and parts of boroughs. And it was found that in sixteen boroughs about the same number of persons would have been admitted to the suffrage at a six-pound rating franchise as was contemplated by the government. Therefore, by accepting the vote there would have been a breaking-up of the framework of the measure. But besides this, the government had to consider the previous history of the bill, especially with reference to the pledges given from time to time—advisedly and deliberately given—to stand or fall by the measure. That is a pledge which should rarely be given by a government, but it has been given by this government under the deepest conviction of public duty in regard to dealing with the question of reform, and with respect to the character of public men and of parliament. Therefore it was that the life of the administration was attached to the life of the measure they proposed. We have felt a sincere desire to conciliate those who are opposed to reform even at the expense of those who are devoted to it, and we have done so by making the number of those to whom the suffrage was to be extended less than that proposed by

the bill of 1860. Therefore it was that we consented to make changes in the procedure on the measure, and we brought in a Redistribution Bill in deference to the opinion of the House and in opposition to our own. Two provisions were objected to—a clause relating to leaseholds in boroughs and a detail of the county franchise—and they were withdrawn, though the withdrawal of the latter was opposed by a vote of their own supporters. Looking to the rejection of Lord Grosvenor's amendment by a majority of only five; to the success of Sir R. Knightley's instruction ingrafting the subject of bribery and corruption, which was carried against the government by ten; to Captain Hayter's amendment, which was intended to frustrate the bill; to Lord Stanley's motion without notice to take the clauses of the Redistribution Bill first, which was supported by 280 members; to Mr. Walpole's motion to make the county franchise 20% instead of 14%, which was only rejected by fourteen; to Mr. Hunt's motion for making the county franchise a rating franchise, which was negatived by only seven; and to Lord Dunkellin's motion to a like effect as to the borough franchise, which was carried by a majority of eleven;—looking, I say, at all this, the government found it impossible to carry on the bill, and we had no alternative but a resignation, and a persistence in our resignation."

Mr. Gladstone said there was no alternative but that of resignation. But there surely was another course open to him and his colleagues, which, though he was silent with respect to it, was much in the minds and apprehensions of his hearers,—the alternative of an appeal to the country by a dissolution of parliament. But this alternative was excluded by the disunion which prevailed in the cabinet itself, containing as it did members of the old Whig party, who had given a reluctant assent to the introduction of the measure, but who, sharing the feeling that was entertained against it, were not prepared to make strong efforts or great sacrifices in order to force it forward.

An administration was formed by Lord Derby, of which the following were the principal members, constituting the new cabinet:—

First Lord of the Treasury	...	...	Earl of Derby.
Lord Chancellor	...	...	Lord Chelmsford.
Lord President of the Council	...	...	Duke of Buckingham.
Lord Privy Seal	...	...	Earl of Malmesbury.
Chancellor of the Exchequer	...	...	Mr. Disraeli.
Home Secretary	...	...	.. , Mr. Walpole.

Foreign Secretary	Lord Stanley.
Colonial Secretary	Earl of Carnarvon.
War Secretary	General Peel.
Indian Secretary	Viscount Cranbourne.
President of the Board of Trade	Sir S. Northcote.
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster	Earl of Devon.
Postmaster-general	Duke of Montrose.
First Lord of the Admiralty	Sir J. Pakington.
Lord Lieutenant of Ireland ...	Marquis of Abercorn.
Chief Secretary for Ireland ...	Lord Naas.
Woods and Forests	Lord J. Manners.

Meanwhile a war, short, fierce, and decisive, had been waged between Prussia and Italy on the one hand, and Austria on the other, which raged and swept by like a tornado, ending in a peace dictated by Prussia; so that parliament had hardly time to consider the bearings of the contest on the interests of this country.

It was not till Monday, July 9th, that Lord Derby had so far overcome the difficulties attendant on the formation of a Conservative administration as to be able to make his ministerial announcement in the House of Lords. Among those who came to listen to it were the Prince and Princess of Wales and the Duke of Edinburgh. Lord Derby had lost much of that buoyant and impetuous vigour which in former times obtained for him the title of "the Rupert of Debate." His voice, his manner, and his whole bearing showed that age and infirmities were coming on him. However, he girded himself resolutely to the work before him, and made the necessary announcements with great tact. Referring to the reform question, he said that he and his colleagues were entirely free and unpledged on that subject, and that he should be especially observant of an axiom laid down by Earl Russell, that no government should undertake a measure of reform without seeing a fair possibility of being able to carry it; and this he believed could only be done by an understanding and a joint action between the two great political parties in the state. He did not deny the existence of anomalies in our constitutional system, and that many persons who did not possess the franchise were fairly entitled to it; but he was afraid that those who professed to be most ardent in the cause of reform would not be contented with any measure which was likely to be carried in parliament. He should be glad, however, if any opportunity occurred for passing a safe and satisfactory measure. He promised the earliest attention of the government to the law of bankruptcy, the administration of the poor-law, and the condition

of workhouses—to which public attention had recently been drawn by a gentleman who, for the sake of obtaining information with regard to it, had disguised himself and passed a night in the casual-ward of one of these establishments.

Under the circumstances in which ministers were placed, their best course was to wind up the business of the session as speedily as they could. But this was not effected till the 10th of August, on which day parliament was prorogued by commission, with the usual formalities.

The failure of the Reform Bill of the late administration made it abundantly evident to those who regarded themselves as unjustly excluded from the franchise, that their claims would never be conceded by the legislature unless, as in 1832, they showed in an unmistakable manner that they were thoroughly in earnest, and that whatever Conservative reaction there might be among the enfranchised classes it did not extend to them. Several associations were formed for the purpose of giving a plain and practical contradiction to the statement industriously circulated that the people were indifferent on this question. The most active and important of these associations were the Reform Union and the Reform League, the latter of which owed much of its efficiency to the energy of its president, Mr. Beales, a highly respectable barrister. This body, by outdoor meetings and in other ways, agitated in favour of the measure from which it took its name. Unfortunately, as generally happens in such cases, meetings that were composed of orderly and well-intentioned persons, who assembled to press in a constitutional manner a claim which they conceived to be founded on manifest justice, were also attended by roughs, pickpockets, and other bad characters, seeking to serve their own criminal purposes by creating disorder and confusion. The council of the league thought that one of the most effectual means they could adopt for promoting their own views was to display their numbers and determination to the upper and influential classes by holding a monster meeting in Hyde Park, and Mr. Beales assured his associates that this might be done without any violation of the law. The government determined to prevent the proposed meeting from being held. A notice forbidding it was issued by Sir Richard Mayne, the head of the London police. Mr. Walpole—an excellent, accomplished, amiable man, but deficient in firmness—thought, and his colleagues thought with him, that the proposed demonstration was likely to disturb the public peace, and lead to riot and disorder. Mr. Beales and his associates conceiving

that they had a legal right to hold their meeting in the park, determined to disregard the notice of the chief commissioner and the prohibition of the government. Accordingly, on the 23rd of July, numerous processions with bands of music converged on the Marble Arch. The gates had been closed at five o'clock. A large body of police guarded the park, and an immense crowd of spectators assembled about the arch. The appearance of the first detachment of the procession was welcomed with loud cheers, and a way was at once opened through the crowd, by which Mr. Beales, Colonel Dickson, and other members of the council of the league advanced to the gate and formally demanded admission, which was refused. Mr. Beales asked by whose orders he was excluded, and was informed that it was by the authority of Sir Richard Mayne. Seeing that farther remonstrance would be useless, he turned away, and led the procession towards Trafalgar-square, where a meeting was duly held, and resolutions in favour of reform, and votes of thanks to Messrs. Gladstone and Bright for their fidelity to the reform cause were carried unanimously. The meeting then dispersed, and those who composed it quietly retired. They had asserted what they had been advised was a legal right, and they had adopted what they conceived to be the best and most practical mode of exposing the falsity of the statement which had been made over and over again, that the working classes were indifferent to the franchise. They hoped and believed that their example would be followed in the other great towns of the kingdom, and that parliament would be made to see that the exclusion of the working classes from the franchise was regarded as a substantial grievance, and that they were prepared to enforce their claim to it by all legal and constitutional means. But while the procession was on its way towards Trafalgar Square the promiscuous crowd that remained behind was not disposed to allow the matter to end in this peaceful manner. On either side of the Marble Arch they laid hold of the park railings, which were not very strongly fixed, and swayed them to and fro till they succeeded in overturning them. They then rushed over them, bearing down the police, doing much mischief to the flowers and shrubs, and remaining masters of the park till the approach of night obliged them to retire to their respective homes. Their conduct was, somewhat unjustly, attributed to the league. A distinction should be drawn between the orderly conduct of the persons who took part in the procession, and the riotous behaviour of sympathising onlookers. But it is probable that the latter had more influence than the former. It opened the

eyes of the government more than all the numerous peaceful demonstrations that were made at the time, and convinced them that a settlement of this great question could not much longer be delayed, and that they must make up their minds to grant a considerable extension of the suffrage. As we said with regard to the Reform Bill of 1832, that it was really carried by the mob of Birmingham and the other parts of the kingdom, so we may say with equal truth of the Reform Bill of 1867, that it was mainly carried by the Hyde Park rioters. Parliament had trifled with this question till the people showed in an unmistakable manner that it could not be trifled with any longer without serious danger; and, after having rejected Mr. Gladstone's bill, it ended by passing a much stronger measure, under the auspices of men who had all along displayed their hostility to every attempt at reform. And they were right in making this tardy concession. These large gatherings and the conduct they displayed were ascribed by the opponents of reform to the influence of a little knot of agitators, and they argued that the persons who were guilty of the conduct we have related had thereby shown their sovereign unfitness for the franchise. But wise and thoughtful men saw that these disturbances were the expression of a strong feeling that could not safely be despised. They knew that neither Mr. Beales nor any of his associates could stir these multitudes as they had done, unless there were really and deeply felt grievances at the bottom of the demand for reform made in this violent and unpleasant manner, and that if any class was suffering from the action of real wrongs, the only way to get them redressed was to allow the voice of that class to be heard in parliament by granting the franchise to a considerable portion of the persons composing it. The result showed that this might be done without danger to the state, and that a House of Commons elected to a great extent by persons belonging to the class represented by the members of the reform league and the Hyde Park rioters might be composed of men of very moderate opinions and strong anti-revolutionary feelings.

The reform question at this moment occupied so prominent a position in the eyes of the nation and of the legislature, that it has been necessary that we should follow out its history, which in fact constitutes the political history of the year, to its conclusion. We must now revert to one necessary portion of the parliamentary work of this as of every other year,—the financial statement of the chancellor of the exchequer, to which now, as on former occasions, the genius of Mr. Gladstone gave an interest which none before or

after him had been able to impart to it. This statement was of a highly satisfactory character. The estimated revenue was 67,575,000*l.*; the estimated expenditure 66,225,000*l.*; leaving a surplus of 1,350,000. The chancellor of the exchequer proposed to repeal the duties on timber and pepper; to put the wine duties on a fairer footing, by making them to depend on the percentage of alcohol; to lower the duties on stage-coaches and post-horses from a penny to a farthing a mile. These reductions would leave a balance of 788,000*l.*, which Mr. Gladstone proposed should be applied to pay off a portion of the national debt. He pointed out that the expense of our present armaments and the interest of debts incurred in past years, formed 83 per cent. of the national expenditure, and that consequently the amount devoted to the civil charges was only 17 per cent. of the whole. He dwelt on the possible effects of the exhaustion of our coal-fields; and on the measures that would then be required to maintain the commercial supremacy of the country. The new government adopted the financial proposals of their predecessors.

The failure on the 10th of May of the old and, as it had hitherto been regarded, respectable and well-established firm of Overend, Gurney, & Co., which had recently been put on the footing of a joint-stock limited-liability company, caused a panic in the city such as had rarely, if ever, occurred before. It was followed by an immediate rise of the Bank of England rate of discount, which was already as high as 8 per cent., to the still higher rate of 9. Bankruptcy after bankruptcy ensued. The English Joint-stock Bank failed; and its failure was speedily succeeded by that of the great railway contractors, Peto & Betts. In dire sequence to these followed the fall of the firms of Shripton, another great railway contractor; of the Imperial Mercantile Credit Association; of the Consolidated Discount Company; and the consequence of these failures was that multitudes of other firms suddenly found themselves on the verge of bankruptcy. Under these circumstances the government acted with a promptitude and decision which probably saved the country from still heavier disasters. The very same night in the House of Commons Mr. Gladstone announced that, after numerous conferences with bank directors and others capable of advising him with regard to the conduct that should be pursued in this crisis, he had determined to suspend the Bank Charter Act. The Bank, in order to afford as much relief as possible, had that day raised its loan and discount to something over 4,000,000*l.*, and had consequently reduced their reserves to

about 3,000,000*l.* The decision of the government had the effect of allaying the panic; and, though many serious failures followed, public confidence gradually revived, and the crisis terminated.

The year 1866 was signalised by the successful laying of the electric telegraph across the Atlantic ocean. The *Great Eastern* steamship, accompanied by the screw steamers *Albany* and *Medway*, was employed to carry the cable from the island of Valentia, situated on the western coast of Ireland. Every precaution that the experience of previous attempts furnished had been taken to insure success. For the first six days all went well; the sea was calm, the cable ran out steadily, the electric tests were perfect, and messages passed backwards and forwards between the land and the *Great Eastern* as she proceeded. On the 18th July, when the vessel was about six hundred miles from her port of departure and one thousand from Newfoundland, a "foul fluke" or entanglement of the cable appeared. Fortunately it was discovered in time. The running-out of the cable was stopped before the fluke entered the paying-out machinery. The knot was carefully and patiently disentangled amidst heavy rain and a strong wind blowing; and after some delay the vessel proceeded on her voyage, and safely reached Newfoundland on the 29th of July; the cable having been laid down in good order, and transmitting messages in a quite satisfactory manner. Having thus accomplished the main object of her voyage, the great ship next proceeded, with the assistance of the vessels that had attended her, to endeavour to pick up the cable which had previously been laid, to splice it, and then carry it forward to the place where the other had been landed.

On the 30th of December, flames burst forth from a paint-room situated in the north-east end of the Crystal Palace, and seized the dry timber of the flooring. As it happened to be Sunday there were fewer persons than usual about the palace when the fire was discovered, and some time elapsed before a sufficient number could be collected to endeavour to extinguish the flames; and notwithstanding all the efforts that could be made by the employes of the palace, and by the members of the fire-brigade, who arrived as soon as possible, a large portion of this beautiful national monument had been destroyed.

During the autumn and winter of this year, the example set by the metropolis was followed in the provinces, and a very active agitation carried on, to compel the ministers, in whose reforming intentions the mass of the people placed little confidence, to retire, and make way for a government which would command the con-

fidence of reformers. The most remarkable of these demonstrations was held at Birmingham, on the 27th of August, attended by Messrs. Bright, Schofield, and Beales, and, as was stated in the journals of the period, it was attended by 250,000 persons; at Manchester another meeting was held, the number attending which was variously estimated at from 100,000 to 150,000; and lastly, one at St. James's Hall, London, at which, Mr. Ayrton having censured the queen for not affording the people, gathered in large numbers in front of her window, some mark of recognition, her Majesty was defended by Mr. Bright, who, said, "I am not accustomed to stand up in defence of those who are possessors of crowns; but I could not sit and hear that observation without a sensation of pain. I think there has been by many persons great injustice done to the queen in reference to her desolate and widowed position; and I venture to say this, that a woman, be she the queen of a great realm, or be she the wife of one of your labouring men, who can keep alive in her heart a great sorrow for the lost object of her life and affection, is not at all wanting in a great and generous sympathy for you." These remarks were received with tremendous cheering, which showed that zeal for reform was not mingled in the minds of those who attended the meeting with any feeling of disaffection to the sovereign, or with any desire to subvert monarchical government.

The weather during the year was, on the whole, damp and chilly. The harvest, which commenced with the prospect of a good crop, was retarded and seriously damaged by heavy autumnal rains. Cholera, typhus, and other zymotic diseases made considerable ravages among the population of the kingdom, and especially that of the metropolis. The cattle-plague, which we have seen spreading so rapidly at the beginning of the year, gradually yielded to the vigorous measures which had been adopted to check its progress. The Fenian conspiracy, more injurious to individuals than formidable to the state, prosecuting its objects rather by secret assassination than by open war, had rendered necessary another suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act in Ireland, and was mainly noticeable as a symptom of the unhealthy condition of the body politic in Ireland, and the necessity of remedies for the evils of that country, more searching and thorough than any that had hitherto been administered.

The year 1867 commenced amidst great pauperism, destitution, and discontent in many parts of the kingdom, and especially in the eastern portion of its great metropolis. Even in prosperous times

these districts of London are sunk in chronic poverty, but in periods of distress this poverty becomes absolute destitution. The monetary derangements which the Russell administration met with so much promptitude and decision, were not entirely removed for some time after the crisis had passed, and aggravated fearfully the wretchedness of this part of the metropolis. Thousands were unemployed; and the inclemency of an exceptionally severe winter aggravated the misery caused by the commercial depression. The reduction of wages, which was a natural and necessary consequence of the state of trade, leading to strikes on the one hand, and lock-outs on the other, intensified the suffering. It was computed that at least 30,000 of the inhabitants of this brick-and-mortar wilderness depended on public and private charity for subsistence. Many of those who were just above them were rapidly sinking to the same level, dragged down not only by the causes that had produced the poverty by which they were surrounded, but by the burden of rates, varying from four shillings and sixpence to six shillings and sixpence in the pound, which were requisite for the support of the pauper population. This state of things necessitated some changes in the poor-law. The great mass of starving labour which crowded these eastern districts was brought there for the service of those who dwelt in the wealthier and happier quarters of the great city; and it was only reasonable that they who profited by their labour in times of prosperity, should contribute to their support in seasons of adversity.

Owing to divisions in the cabinet, the question of reform had been left in suspense by the government, but at the last moment Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli succeeded in persuading their colleagues to consent to the introduction of a measure dealing with that difficult question, and inspiring them with the hope that it might be so framed as to strengthen the Conservative party. They were no doubt right; for neither the nation nor the House of Commons would have consented to leave the question any longer in abeyance, and the ministry would not have retained office a single fortnight after the commencement of the session if it had declined to deal with it. But the difficulties they had to contend with were serious indeed; and most of all difficult was the position of Mr. Disraeli, as head of the government in the House of Commons. The leader of a party that had all along dreaded and opposed any extension of the suffrage, regarded with jealousy and suspicion by many of those whose support was essential to the success of his enterprise, opposed by a large,

though divided majority, hampered by declarations he had made against the numerous reform bills which the Liberal party had brought forward—he was in a position which must necessarily task to the utmost his dexterity both as a framer and as a conductor of the measure. However, he rose to the difficulty, with consummate ability. Two plans had been suggested: one of a bolder character, which was ultimately laid before the House; the other more moderate, which, in deference to the objections made to the former, was brought forward in the first instance.

The following passage in the royal speech, at the opening of the session, gave the first authoritative announcement that the ministry had decided to grapple with the question:—

“Your attention will again be called to the state of the representation of the people in parliament; and I trust that your deliberations, conducted in a spirit of moderation and mutual forbearance, may lead to the adoption of measures which, without unduly disturbing the balance of political power, shall freely extend the elective franchise.”

The phrase “the balance of political power,” was one that was very frequently repeated by Mr. Disraeli in the earlier debates on the bill. It was vague, but not unmeaning. The idea it was intended to convey was, that the bill was not to impair the influence in the election of members which the territorial aristocracy enjoyed.

The ministry was profuse in promises of legislation. Its programme for the session included colonial consolidation, metropolitan water-works, investigation of the law of trades-unions, extension of the factory acts to other trades, improvement of the mercantile marine, of the navigation laws, of the pecuniary arrangements of embarrassed railways, of the treatment of the sick and distressed in the metropolis, of the relations between Irish landlords and tenants, the amendment of the law of bankruptcy, and the consolidation of the probate, divorce, and admiralty courts. It seemed that ministers were determined to show that they were not inferior in energy and activity to their predecessors.

They must also be commended for the promptitude with which they entered on the work of parliamentary reform. The session commenced on Tuesday, the 5th of February; on the following Monday Mr. Disraeli made his statement of the manner in which he and his colleagues proposed to deal with the question. Often as the subject had been brought forward, there was still as much

anxiety as ever to hear the ministerial explanation; the same uncomfortable crowding of all parts of the House, the same early attendance of members, the same eagerness to obtain places in the Speaker's and strangers' galleries, the same affluence of peers and illustrious personages. Mr. Disraeli began by laying down, amidst the loud laughter of the opposition, that, in the opinion of the government, parliamentary reform should no longer be a question which ought to decide the fate of ministers. He based this opinion on the failure of all parties in the State to deal with the question. Successive governments, in 1852, 1854, 1858, 1859, 1860, and 1866, had brought in reform bills, and had not been able to carry them. He then went on to state that before 1832 the working classes had a certain power in the representation: they could return two members in Preston. In Coventry, and in many other boroughs, they had considerable influence as freemen. In 1832 these rights were abolished; and he thought now, as he thought then, that the abolition of them was a grave error, which he proposed to rectify. He announced that he meant to proceed by way of resolution. Mr. Hunt gave notice of a bill on the subject of rating, which was intended to pave the way for consideration of the government plan of reform.

While the resolutions on which the plan was to be based were being submitted to the House of Commons, a meeting of working men's trades-unions was being held at the Agricultural Hall, Islington, and at which 20,000 persons were computed to have been present. The resolutions were read to them by Mr. P. A. Taylor, who also informed them of the purport of the minister's statement. After the meeting had received this information, they resolved that the statements made in the House of Commons that evening on the subject of reform in the representation of the people in parliament were eminently unsatisfactory and completed the proof of the government being unworthy of the confidence of the country.

When the 25th of February, the day appointed for the consideration of the ministerial resolutions arrived, the House was once more filled by a densely packed and earnest crowd of members and spectators. A bill founded on them and so hastily framed that it was jocosely named "the ten-minutes' bill," was brought forward, only to be withdrawn the following day; when Mr. Disraeli announced that he would bring in a new bill on the subject. Mr. Gladstone expressed a hope that the bill would be such that all differences about it might be settled in committee. But before the arrival of the day fixed for its introduction, it appeared

that the differences of opinion in the cabinet on the reform question had caused the resignation of the Earl of Carnarvon, Viscount Cranbourne, now Earl of Salisbury, and General Peel. Mr. Disraeli announced that he proposed to introduce his Reform bill on the 18th of March; and suggested that it should be read a second time on Monday, the 23rd; and that if it were then accepted by the House, they could go into committee as soon as was consistent with the transaction of public business; and he should prefer, on the part of the government, that the House should sit in committee on the bill *de die in diem*.

Mr. Gladstone expressed a hope that the reform measure, when it appeared, would be of a simple, straightforward, and intelligible character: that, though it must be new, it should not be "new-fangled." He said that the people of this country were attached to simplicity of procedure. Above all, he trusted that the contemplated measure would not contain two sets of provisions; one of them framed to have the semblance of giving, and the other to have the reality of taking away. He added, that if ministers, avoiding these changes, would submit a plan that promised to effect good in a way that was simple, straightforward, intelligible, and constitutional in its character, he ventured to promise that it would be received on his side of the House in no grudging spirit, with no recollection of the past, and no revival of mutual suspicions and complaints. These were wise counsels and generous overtures; and it would have been well for the government if it could have embraced them. But Mr. Disraeli now found himself in the position in which Sir Robert Peel had formerly been, having to deal with a section of his party which was determined not to accept changes which had become inevitable and indispensable; and he was obliged to tax his ingenuity to the utmost to produce a measure which would give a considerable extension of the franchise without causing too much alarm to this portion of his followers.

The measure, which had already divided the Conservative councils, and caused so important a secession from the ministry, was brought forward by Mr. Disraeli on the 18th of March. It was certainly bold, and perhaps the best which, considering on the one hand the demands of the country, and on the other hand the principles, the sentiments, and the interests of his own followers, it was possible for him to bring forward.

The franchise in boroughs was conferred on every man of full age, and not subject to any legal incapacity, who for the whole of the preceding two years had been the inhabitant occupier, whether as

owner or tenant, of any dwelling-house within the borough, and had during the time of his occupation of it been rated to all rates (if any) made for the relief of the poor in respect of these premises, and had before the 20th of July paid all rates due up to the preceding 5th day of January.

The franchise in counties was to be conferred on every man of full age, and not subject to any legal incapacity, who on the last day of July in any year, and during the preceding twelve months, had been the occupier as owner or tenant of premises of any tenure within the county of the ratable value of fifteen pounds or upwards, and had during the time of his occupation been rated to all rates made for the relief of the poor, and had paid before the 20th of July all rates due from him on that property since the preceding 5th of January.

But, in addition to the franchises thus made to depend on the ownership or occupation of property, it was also proposed that there should be—

An educational franchise, to be conferred on all graduates or associates in arts of any university of the United Kingdom; on any male person who has passed at any senior middle-class examination of any university of the United Kingdom; on any ordained priest or deacon of the Church of England, or minister of any other denomination; on barristers, pleaders, attorneys, medical men, and certificated schoolmasters.

A pecuniary franchise to belong to every man who on the 1st of July in any year, and during the two years immediately preceding, has had a balance of not less than fifty pounds deposited in a savings-bank, or in the Bank of England, or in any parliamentary stocks or funds, or has during the twelve months immediately preceding the 5th of April in any year been charged with and paid twenty shillings for assessed taxes and income tax.

Another clause of the bill provided that a person registered as a voter for a borough by reason of his having been charged with and paid the requisite amount of assessed taxes and income tax, or either of such taxes, should not by reason of being so registered lose any right to which he might be entitled (if otherwise duly qualified) to be registered as a voter for the same borough in respect of any franchise involving occupation of premises and payment of rates, and when registered in respect of such double qualification, he should be entitled to give two votes for the member (or, if there be more than one, for each member) to be returned to serve in parliament for the borough.

The provisions for the redistribution of seats were, that Totnes, Reigate, Great Yarmouth, and Lancaster should cease to return any member; that Honiton, Thetford, Wells, Evesham, Marlborough, Norwich, Richmond, Lymington, Knaresborough, Andover, Leominster, Tewkesbury, Ludlow, Ripon, Huntingdon, Maldon, Cirencester, Bodmin, Great Marlow, Devizes, Hertford, Dorchester, and Lichfield, should henceforward only return one; that the Tower Hamlets should be divided into two boroughs, each returning two members; that the following counties or county divisions should be divided into two parts, each returning two members to parliament—South Devon, West Kent, North Lancashire, South Lancashire, Lincoln (parts of Lindsay), Middlesex, South Staffordshire, and East Surrey; that Torquay, Darlington, Hartlepool, Gravesend, St. Helen's, Burnley, Staleybridge, Wednesbury, Croydon, Middlesbrough, Dewsbury, Burslem, and the University of London, should each return one member to parliament.

This bill was based on the principle embodied in Lord Dunsford's motion.* Thus, instead of drawing a 5*l.*, 6*l.*, or 7*l.* line to cut off what was called the residuum, that is to say, the class whose extreme poverty rendered them most liable to be bribed or improperly influenced, the government adopted household suffrage, with the qualification of the payment of rates; thus excluding from the franchise compound householders, who did not pay their rates personally, and those whose rates, under various acts, were compounded for by their landlords, and all lodgers. Mr. Disraeli calculated that his bill would admit 237,000 additional voters, but would leave 486,000 still excluded from the borough franchise, and that the result of his whole plan would be that one quarter of the voting power would belong to the aristocracy, another quarter to the working classes, and the remaining half to the middle classes. Such was his proposed "balance of political power." It was, however, afterwards shown that his household suffrage would really have enfranchised a smaller number of borough voters than the bill of 1866.

Mr. Disraeli's exposition of the ministerial measure was followed by a discussion in which many of its features were strongly assailed by speakers on both sides of the House, and especially that part of it which conferred the dual vote, which was almost universally condemned, and to which Mr. Gladstone in particular proclaimed implacable hostility.

When the question of the second reading was brought forward,

* See p. 509.

Mr. Gladstone, who had conferred with a meeting of his parliamentary followers consented, to avoid disunion in the Liberal camp, by allowing that stage of the bill to pass without a division. But he expressed the strongest disapproval of it as a whole, and enumerated the following features in it which he regarded as peculiarly objectionable:—

1. Omission of the lodger franchise.
2. Omission of provisions against traffic in votes of householders of the lowest class by corrupt payment of the rates.
3. Disqualifications of compound householders under the existing law.
4. Additional disqualifications of compound householders under the proposed law.
5. The franchise founded on direct taxation.
6. The dual vote.
7. The inadequate redistribution of seats.
8. The inadequate reduction of the franchise in counties.
9. Voting-papers.
10. Collateral or special franchises.

The dual vote, almost universally condemned, was withdrawn. After a good deal of party manœuvring, which excited intense feeling at the time, the government succeeded in getting their bill into committee; and the formal clauses, containing the title, and excluding from its operation Ireland, Scotland and the two universities, were passed.

We now come to a curious episode in the history of the Conservative Reform Bill. On the 5th of April about 140 Liberal members met at Mr. Gladstone's residence to determine on the course which the party, under the circumstances in which they were placed, should adopt with regard to the government bill. It was decided that Mr. Coleridge should propose the following resolution before the House went into committee on the Reform Bill: "That it be an instruction to the committee that they have power to alter the law of rating, and to provide that in every parliamentary borough the occupiers of tenements below a given ratable value be relieved from liability to personal rating, with a view to fix a line for the borough franchise at which all occupiers shall be entered on the rate-book, and shall have equal facilities for the enjoyment of such franchise as a residential franchise." Much discussion took place with regard to this proposal, and some difference of opinion was expressed; but it was understood to be decided that the motion should be brought forward on the 8th of

April, the day on which the House was to go into committee on the bill. However, on that very evening a meeting, consisting of between forty and fifty members of the Liberal party, was held in the tea-room of the House of Commons. At this meeting it was agreed that the persons composing it should unite for the purpose of limiting the instructions to be proposed by Mr. Cole-ridge to the first clause of his resolution, which applied to the law of rating. They then appointed a deputation to Mr. Gladstone to convey to him the feeling of the meeting, and to assure him that the members composing it would continue to give him a loyal support in committee. Mr. Gladstone, finding that by the defection of so many of his supporters he was almost certain to incur a defeat, yielded to their demands, and the resolution was altered accordingly. Mr. Disraeli accepted the altered resolution, and the House then went into committee on the bill. Thereupon Mr. Gladstone gave notice of several important amendments, which Mr. Disraeli declared to be the relinquished instructions in another form, and distinctly announced that if they should be carried, the government would not proceed with the bill. As most of the members who composed the meeting at the tea-room still held together, forming a party known as the Tea-room party, government triumphed by a majority of twenty-one in the division on the first of Mr. Gladstone's resolutions. He therefore announced in a letter to Mr. Crawford, one of the members for the City, who had asked him whether he intended to persevere in moving the amendments of which he had given notice, that he would not proceed with the amendments now on the paper in his name, nor give notice of other amendments such as he had contemplated; but would gladly accompany others in voting against any attempt, from whatever quarter, to limit yet further the scanty modicum of enfranchisement proposed by the government, or in improving, where practicable, the provisions of the bill."

The discussion of Mr. Gladstone's first resolution showed that a very great confusion of opinion existed in the ranks both of the ministerialists and of their opponents; for while Sir William Heathcote, Lord Cranbourne, and Mr. Beresford Hope, all staunch Conservatives, strongly assailed the government and denounced its bill, that bill was supported by Mr. Roebuck and several advanced Radicals, who hoped, and, as the result showed, not without reason, that they would be able to transform it into such a measure as they desired.

After the rejection of Mr. Gladstone's first resolution, the House

adjourned for the Easter vacation; the supporters of the government being full of exultation on account of their unexpected victory. It now seemed probable that ministers would succeed in carrying their bill, though it was confidently expected that it would be modified in many of its provisions by the Liberal majority. Nor was this expectation disappointed. Never was a measure so completely turned inside-out and upside-down. All the ten changes which Mr. Gladstone had pointed out as necessary to make it a good measure—but which no one ever expected that his party would carry, or the government accept—were adopted, with the single exception of the second, perhaps the least important of them all, and this, too, was subsequently effected with scarcely a show of opposition. The “Conservative surrender,” as it was termed, was as complete as Mr. Bright could have desired.

We should exhaust both the space at our disposal and the patience of the reader were we to attempt to follow out the various vicissitudes of the long struggle by which this result was obtained. Some of the changes, however, that were effected—either from their importance, or from the circumstances under which they were made—demand a brief notice.

On the 17th of May, Mr. Hodgkinson, member for Newark, proposed to add to the third clause of the bill the following words, which would have the effect of abolishing the system of compounding for rates in parliamentary boroughs: “That no person other than the occupier shall be rated to parochial rates in respect of premises occupied by him within the limits of a parliamentary borough, all acts to the contrary notwithstanding.” The system which this motion was designed to destroy had all along been represented as one of the great Conservative safeguards of the bill. The government, as was well known, had secured a majority. Mr. Gladstone, aware of this, came into the House expecting, as a matter of course, that the motion would be rejected; Mr. Disraeli’s own colleagues entertained the same expectation when, to the astonishment probably of every one present, Mr. Disraeli, acting entirely on his own responsibility, accepted the amendment—which had the effect of nearly quadrupling the number of electors on whom the franchise would be conferred—and afterwards persuaded his colleagues that the adoption of this proposition was an improvement of the measure. When the committee again met, Mr. Ayrton moved a resolution reducing the period of residence required for the franchise from two years to one. The motion was resisted by the government, but was

carried by 278 to 197. Mr. Disraeli at once announced that he could not proceed with the bill without consultation with his colleagues; and another ministerial crisis seemed to be impending; but on the following night he announced that the government had decided to bow to the decision of the House.

The Liberal leaders now hoped to make the bill all that they had desired; and the government, conceding a ten-pound lodger franchise, abandoned the fancy franchises, reduced the county qualification from 15*l.* to 10*l.*, raised the standard of semi-disfranchisement from 7,000 to 10,000, and consequently the number of boroughs condemned to lose one representative to forty-six. They proposed to distribute the seats thus placed at their disposal, in the following manner: two to Hackney, two to Chelsea, with Kensington; one each to twelve boroughs, which up to this time had not been represented, and an additional member to each of the following counties or county divisions—West Kent, North Lancashire, and East Surrey; to divide South Lancashire into two, and Lincolnshire, Derbyshire, Devonshire, Somersetshire, the West Riding of Yorkshire, Cheshire, Norfolk, Staffordshire, and Essex, into three electoral districts, each of them to be represented by two members. It was also proposed that the Universities of London and Durham should be combined for the purpose of returning a joint representative, instead of the member being given to London University alone, as had originally been intended.

Mr. Disraeli, in announcing this large modification of his original plan, stated that it had been framed for the purpose of counterbalancing some of the more democratic elements that had been introduced into the bill, and that the government would not recede from it. And the House, anxious to complete the work to which so much time had been devoted—anxious, above all, to avoid being sent back to their constituents before they had accomplished it—rejected by a majority of eight a motion brought forward by Mr. Laing, and supported by Mr. Gladstone, for giving three members each to the following towns, having each a population of upwards of 150,000: Bristol, Birmingham, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, and Sheffield. Mr. Disraeli was not, however, equally successful in his attempt to amalgamate the high-church University of Durham with the liberal and free-thinking University of London; but quietly submitted to the decision of the House, after two divisions. The proposal made by the minister for extending to the counties the privilege of voting by papers, already possessed by the universities, was also rejected.

Mr. Horsfall, member for Liverpool, having brought forward a motion for giving a third member each to Manchester, Liverpool, and Birmingham, the proposal was opposed in the first instance by the government, but was at length conceded by Mr. Disraeli, who at the same time added Leeds to the list of towns to which a third member was to be given. This concession increased the hostility with which the ministry and their measure were regarded by Lord Cranbourne and those that thought with him, who now sat below the gangway on the ministerial side of the House, and led General Peel to say that henceforth he should conclude that there was "nothing with less vitality than a vital point, nothing so insecure as the securities that the bill offered, and nothing so elastic as the conscience of a cabinet minister." And certainly he and his friends had good reason to complain when they saw the so-called securities swept away one after another, and the bill introduced by the Conservative ministry transformed, with their consent, into a measure which Mr. Bright himself might have introduced, and which, if it did not altogether satisfy the wishes of the members of the Reform League and the Reform Union, certainly surpassed their expectations. The House of Commons, thoroughly weary of their work, and finding themselves now in the month of July, hurried through the later clauses of the bill, tossed overboard without consideration amendments of all kinds, loudly called for the schedules, rapidly passed them; and so at last the bill, after having been thirteen weeks in committee, came before the House for the third reading. Mr. Disraeli was then compelled to listen to taunts and sarcasms as severe as those which he had heaped on Sir Robert Peel, and complaints of betrayal from the Conservative party as bitter as those he had himself uttered against the illustrious statesman who led that party when he was an obscure member of it. Lord Cranbourne said, "I should deeply regret to find that the House of Commons has applauded a policy of legerdemain; and I should above all things regret that this great gift to the people, if gift you think it, should have been purchased at the cost of a political betrayal which has no parallel in our parliamentary annals, which strikes at the root of all mutual confidence, which is the very soul of our party government, and on which only the strength and freedom of our representative institutions can be sustained." The language of Mr. Lowe was, if possible, still more caustic. "If I was not deceived," he said, "I must have been a prophet—a character to which I have no claim; for how was it possible that I, who was

daily in confidential communion with the honourable gentlemen opposite, when they held widely different opinions, could ever have believed that, after their declarations last year, and after condescending to accept from us help they could not have done without, they would have done what they have done? Was it in human foresight to have imagined such a thing? Let us look a little farther. Was it to be conceived that right honourable gentlemen, who had given no indications of the extreme facility of changing their opinions, and lending themselves to the arts of treachery, would, for the sake of keeping a few of them in office for a short time, and giving some small patronage to half-a-dozen lawyers, have been prepared to sacrifice all the principles, all the convictions, and all the traditions of their lives?" Mr. Disraeli was not a man to let these invectives pass without a rejoinder. "If," said he, "we from the bottom of our hearts believe that the measure which we are now requesting you to pass is not, on the whole, the wisest and best that could be passed under the circumstances, I would even admit that our conduct was infamous. But I want to know what the right honourable gentleman thinks of his own conduct, when, having assisted in turning out the government of Lord Derby, in 1859, because they would not reduce the borough franchise, he, if I am not much mistaken, having been one of the active managers in that intrigue, accepted office, in 1860, under the government of Lord Palmerston, who brought forward a measure of parliamentary reform, which he disapproved, and more than disapproved, because he invited his political opponents to defeat it? And yet the right honourable gentleman talks to us of infamy. Sir, the prognostications of evil uttered by the noble lord (Cranbourne) I can respect, because I know they are sincere; the warnings and the prophecies of the right honourable gentleman I treat in another spirit," etc. The House, however, was little disposed to trouble itself about the vehement denunciations of Lord Cranbourne, the predictions and lamentations of Mr. Lowe, or the apologies of the chancellor of the exchequer. The dominant feeling was impatience to have done with the measure which had occupied so large a share of attention and caused so much anxiety. When, therefore, the Speaker put the question, that this bill be now read a third time, there was a loud and general shout of "Ay!" One solitary voice from below the gangway, on the ministerial side of the House, cried "No!" And the further question being put, that the bill do pass, it was carried amid loud cheering from all parts of the House. On the following day the measure was introduced into

the House of Lords, and read a first time. The question of the second reading was brought forward on Monday, July 21st, when, after a debate extending over two evenings, an amendment moved by Earl Grey was negatived, and the bill read a second time without a division. Unfortunately, Lord Derby was seized with illness at this critical moment, and obliged to leave the conduct of the measure in the hands of Lord Malmesbury. Lord Cairns proposed and carried two important amendments, one of which raised the lodger franchise from 10*l.* to 15*l.*; and the other enacted that in any contested election in which three members were to be chosen, no elector should be allowed to vote for more than two. This "cumulative vote," as it was called, had already been supported in the House of Commons by a large minority. On the 6th of August Lord Derby again made his appearance in the House, against the advice of his medical attendants. He met an amendment moved by Earl Grey, by declaring that its probable effect, if carried, would be to cause the loss of the bill; and thus procured the defeat of the amendment, though by a narrow majority. He also obtained a reversal of the decision to which the House had come, during his absence, with regard to the lodger franchise. Then came the passing of the bill. The last remarks made on it by Earl Russell were listened to with the attention and respect that his character and antecedents secured for him. He said that he thought the bill ought to be passed, and he hoped that it would settle the question for some time to come. He predicted that it would cause more corruption, bribery, and treating than ever, because the franchise was extended by it to a great number of ignorant persons, without any settled political opinion, and open to temptations; but he did not believe that this would produce any serious mischief, because vital points depended on the temper of the people. He expressed an opinion that the redistribution part of the scheme had not been carried far enough; and he strongly censured a declaration made by Lord Derby, that he had introduced such a bill for the sake of his party; a course which he denounced as incompatible with a belief in the sincerity of those who adopted it. Such tactics had never been heard of before, and he hoped that they would never be heard of again. Lord Derby closed the debates on the measure by thanking the peers for the temper and candour with which they had treated the bill. He acknowledged that it was a great experiment, and that they had taken a leap in the dark; but expressed confidence in the sound sense of his countrymen.

The same evening it was carried down to the House of

Commons. The following Thursday was fixed for the consideration of the Lords' amendments. From all parts of the kingdom members flocked up to London, and the benches on both sides of the House were again crowded. There were only three of the Lords' amendments on which a struggle took place. The first proposed to enact that the electors in large constituencies which were to send three members to parliament should have only two votes; it was maintained by a majority of 49. The next restricted the number of votes of the electors of the City of London to three; it was carried by a majority of 64. The third authorised the use of voting-papers; it was rejected by a majority of 52. The Upper House acquiesced; and so the bill was at last finally adopted.

This act was the chief work of the session. The budget was brought forward, and passed almost without notice; the chancellor of the exchequer explained it to a large audience. His statement was brief, and was listened to with attention; but his plans excited little enthusiasm, and encountered no opposition. With the passing of the Reform Bill the interest of the session expired and gave way to a desire to finish as rapidly as possible the work that remained to be done, in order that parliament might be prorogued without delay.

The war against the king of Abyssinia, in consequence of his obstinate detention of several Englishmen, some of whom were accredited to him by our government, rendered necessary an autumn session. All intention of making conquests was distinctly disavowed, and parliament had only to vote the means necessary to defray the expenses of the operations. They were provided for by the grant of an additional penny on the income tax and by the balances in the exchequer.

In the course of this year some very serious disturbances were created by an itinerant lecturer named Murphy. He went about denouncing the Romish priesthood and the confessional in the coarsest terms, and in a manner calculated to rouse the indignation of the lower classes of the Irish Roman Catholics. This effect was aggravated by a work entitled "The Confessional Unmasked," in which Murphy endeavoured to show that the tendency of the system of confession practised by the Roman Catholic priesthood was highly immoral; and in support of these views he published and distributed by thousands and tens of thousands extracts from works intended for the guidance of the Roman Catholic priests in dealing with penitents. It was evident that if the tendency of these works was as mischievous as he represented them to be if whispered in

the closets of the confessional, they must be much more widely pernicious if proclaimed from the house-tops; and that if these documents were calculated to suggest evil thoughts when used for the guidance of men of education, they must do far more mischief when they were thrown broadcast, as they were by Mr. Murphy, to women and young children. The pamphlet was ultimately seized under Lord Campbell's act for suppressing indecent publications, and many thousand copies of it were destroyed. But this did not prevent Mr. Murphy from labouring in his mischievous vocation; and, unfortunately for the public tranquillity, the lower orders of the Roman Catholics fell into the snare laid for them; and instead of treating the lecturer with contempt, and leaving him to harangue empty benches, they, by their violent and tumultuous conduct, gave him the notoriety he sought, and drew large audiences to listen to his trashy lectures. In this way riots were caused at Wolverhampton, Wednesbury, and other places which he visited. At Birmingham the mayor, finding that disturbances had arisen wherever he appeared, refused to allow him the use of the town-hall. Murphy and his friends then erected a large wooden building, in which he delivered his tirades. The low Irish violently resented the foul abuse poured forth by the lecturer on a religion and a priesthood to which they were warmly attached. The Orange partisans of Murphy rallied round him in still larger numbers than their opponents. A fight ensued, many persons on both sides were seriously injured, the military was called out, the Riot-act read, and for two or three days Birmingham was kept in a state which could only be paralleled by the Lord George Gordon disturbances in London during the last century. The only gainer by these tumults was Murphy himself, whom they made more notorious than ever, and who received from all quarters invitations to repeat his lectures, and encouragement to persevere in his mischievous agitation. He went on his way, reviving the old no-popery feeling which had so long lain dormant, and exciting tumult and disorder in almost every town where large numbers of Irishmen resided, till at last he became a victim, and, as his friends regarded him, a martyr, to the fury which he had succeeded in exciting.

The effect which his lectures produced was not wholly due to the fanaticism either of his supporters or his opponents. There was another and a more disgraceful motive at the bottom of his success. The attempts he made to stir the dying embers of Orange fanaticism would have been utterly ineffectual but for the strong

trades-union feeling that existed against the Irish because their presence in our manufacturing towns had the effect of keeping down the rate of wages. Another cause of the extraordinary sensation that Murphy succeeded in creating is to be found in the indignation which was awakened among all classes of English men by the disturbances which had been raised by the Fenian organisation to which we have already referred, the members of which were still pursuing their course of mischievous agitation with a reckless disregard of the wrong they inflicted. Some of the members of this secret confederacy had formed the design of seizing Chester Castle, and obtaining possession of the arms stored in it, and were only prevented from making this audacious attempt by finding that their designs had been communicated to the authorities of the town, and that measures had been taken to defeat them. At Manchester two men named Kelly and Deasy, after a severe struggle, were apprehended by the police, and found to be armed with loaded revolvers. They were recognised by the chief constable of Liverpool as officers of the so-called Fenian army. On the 18th of September they were brought before the stipendiary magistrate at Manchester, by whom the case was remanded for further examination. They were then ironed and placed in the prison van to be conducted to the borough gaol on the Hyde Road. Just as the van had passed under the bridge of the London and North-Western Railway a considerable number of men fired on it and killed one of the horses. They then rushed out, and one of the assailants shot Sergeant Brett, a policeman, who was in the van, the keys of which he refused to deliver to the attacking party. They then broke open the door and liberated the prisoners. Kelly and Deasy at once made their way off, and found a place of concealment. A man named Allen, said to be the person who fired the shot by which Brett was killed, was pursued and apprehended, as were also about twenty other men who were supposed to have taken part in the rescue. This attack, made in the open day, in the neighbourhood of one of the largest cities of the empire, produced a profound sensation throughout the country. Rewards were offered for the recapture of Kelly and Deasy; the soldiers stationed at Manchester had orders to keep within their barracks and to be ready to act at a moment's notice; the city police were armed; the prisoners were escorted to the gaol by a large body of cavalry and an omnibus filled with infantry prepared to act at a moment's notice; the mayor and several other magistrates followed in

carriages, to be ready to give orders in case any attempt at rescue should be made; and a strong detachment of infantry guarded the gaol. Several persons suspected of having taken part in the rescue were subsequently arrested. A special commission was issued for the trial of the prisoners, and Justices Blackburn and Mellor, the judges appointed under it, at once set out for Manchester. After some delay the trials of the persons accused of having been more immediately concerned in the murder of Brett were proceeded with; and the jury, after deliberating for two hours, pronounced them guilty. Judge Mellor, in passing sentence, said that no one who had been present during the trial could doubt the justice of the verdict, and added that he should be deceiving the prisoners if he were to hold out to them any expectation that mercy would be shown to them. Three of them, Allen, Larkin, and Gould, were executed. Great efforts had been made by their fellow-conspirators to save them; the ministers had been threatened with assassination; and such was the alarm which the audacity of the Fenians had inspired that up to the last moment there was a strong expectation that some great blow would be struck and some great effort made to save Allen and his two companions from their impending fate. The inhabitants of Manchester felt as if they were sitting on the crater of a volcano from which an eruption might burst forth at any moment. On the other hand, the authorities had taken effectual precautions against any contemplated attempt to rescue or avenge the murderers. The sentence of the court was carried out in the most orderly and tranquil manner on Saturday, the 23rd of November, in the presence of about 12,000 persons.

On Friday, the 10th of December, another reckless attempt, attended by the usual disregard of the injury or loss of life to innocent persons which it might involve, was made in London. Some Fenians were confined in the House of Detention at Clerkenwell. Information had been conveyed to their keepers that an attempt would be made to release them by blowing-up a portion of the wall of the building in which they were confined. The police were therefore instructed to be on the alert, and the prisoners were prevented from taking exercise in the yard at the usual time. A man was observed wheeling a barrel towards the prison, and, with the assistance of a companion, placing it in contact with the wall; they then lighted a fusee projecting from it, and ran away. They had scarcely disappeared when it exploded with a report that shook the metropolis, and was

distinctly heard for many miles beyond it. The wall against which the barrel had been placed bounded the yard in which the prisoners were usually recreating at this hour. Had they been there, they would have run a great risk of being killed or seriously injured. The wall was two feet thick and twenty feet high, and a breach was made in it by the explosion twenty feet wide at the bottom and seventy feet at the top; so that prisoners who had escaped injury might have made their way out without difficulty. Several houses near to the spot where the barrel had been deposited were almost entirely destroyed. Six persons were killed on the spot, six more died soon after, and at least a hundred and twenty were more or less seriously injured. Timothy Desmond, Jeremiah Allen, and Ann Justice, who had frequently visited the prisoners and had been seen lurking about the prison just before the explosion occurred, were arrested. Ultimately a man named Barrett was tried, convicted, and executed.

Those events, but especially the murder of Brett, produced a profound impression throughout England. It was regarded not only as a crime of great atrocity, but also as an indication of a deep-seated disease in the body politic, requiring other and more thorough remedies than had hitherto been applied; and the state of public opinion thus produced made Mr. Gladstone feel that the time had come when the Irish Church question might be faced with a fair prospect of success.

Outrages even more base and cowardly than those committed by the Fenians were this year brought home to members of English trades-unions. The atrocities perpetrated by some of them had attracted general attention; and Lord Derby's government had issued a commission to inquire into their organisation and rules. The general object of the societies whose character the commission was appointed to investigate, was to protect the interests of the workmen of the different trades they represented, and to raise and maintain the market price of their labour. But the manner in which they pursued these objects was very different. In some of the unions the action of the men was moderate, and the rules fair and reasonable; in others they were absurd or infamous. In some cases the members of the trade were free to join the union or to abstain from joining it as they thought proper, in others the most frightful outrages were perpetrated against those who refused to join the union, or, having joined it, to submit to the dictation, often exceedingly stupid and arbitrary, of its governing body. One objectionable feature common to almost all these societies was the

combination of a provident club with a trades-union; thus giving the council power to punish those who refused to comply with their requirements by depriving them of the benefit of a club to which perhaps they had contributed for many years, and to which they had looked forward as a sure resource in sickness and old age.

The control obtained by these or by still more questionable means was exercised with excessive harshness. Every member of the union was required to strike as often as the governing body might think proper, however well he might be satisfied with the wages he received; he must not take piece-work or work overtime, and he was subjected to a variety of regulations with regard to his trade, the violation of any one of which would bring on him condign punishment. In a word, the members of these unions were ruled with a tyranny almost insupportable; and the most infamous means were resorted to in order to compel persons to join the unions, or to punish them for their refusal; and these means were justified by those who resorted to them on the ground that the non-unionists obtained the benefits which resulted, or were supposed to result, from the action of the union, without helping to defray the expenses, or sharing the risks which attended this war between labour and capital.

The town of Sheffield had long been notorious for outrages of a peculiarly diabolical character, perpetrated, as was alleged, at the instigation of some of its trades-unions. The allegation was indignantly denied by the officers of those societies, who loudly demanded that the charges against them should be investigated by the commission. Their demand was granted; and Mr. Overend, Q.C., was appointed to conduct the inquiry. He was empowered to grant a free pardon to those who would disclose what they knew of the transactions he was appointed to investigate. Day after day he pursued the inquiry with great ability, and, under his skilful and searching cross-examination, facts were elicited which left no doubt that some of the officers of trades-unions were implicated in the crimes that had been perpetrated. One atrocity after another was disclosed, till all previously discovered outrages were reduced to comparative insignificance by the revelations that were made respecting the death of a man named Linley, who had been murdered some time before, but whose assassins had hitherto escaped detection. On Wednesday, 19th of June, a man named Hallam, who, a few days before, had been committed to prison for six weeks for contempt of court, promised to tell all he knew, and was consequently brought up

for re-examination. He confessed his complicity in some very heinous trade outrages, and stated the amount that had been paid him for the perpetration of them by Broadhead, the secretary of the union, and finally admitted that, after following Linley from place to place, he had at length shot him with an air-gun as he was sitting in the back-room of the Crown Inn.

Further investigations carried on at Manchester, and other large manufacturing towns, revealed outrages scarcely less atrocious. One brickmaker who dismissed union men had his shed burnt by naphtha, and much valuable property consumed. Other masters gave up business through fear of being assassinated. Thousands of needles were put into brickmakers' clay to injure the hands of non-union men who refused to obey the tyrannical behests of the union. Persons employed to protect property from these and other attempts were shot at, wounded, and even murdered; a favourite mare was roasted to death in a slow agony, lasting for more than two hours. Such were the means by which some of the Manchester unionists sought to enforce compliance with their orders; and those in others places were not far behind them.

The indignation which the conduct of these fiends naturally rouses must not be allowed to blind us to the fact that the outrages of which they were guilty were the results of class legislation, arising from a want of proper representation in parliament of the class of which the trades-unions were composed. The protection of the law was refused to these societies even when they confined themselves to objects which were clearly legitimate, and the consequence was that they attempted to compass their aims by means which were illegitimate. If the law would not protect them, they would defy the law. Thus it always happens that injustice is as pernicious to those whom it is designed to protect as to those against whom it is employed. To this fact the eyes of the legislature have been opened, thanks in no small degree to the investigations of the trades-union commissioners; and the result of legislation founded on justice has been that such outrages as those we have recorded have become almost or altogether things of the past.

The session of 1868 found the Derby government, as the session of 1867 had left it, face to face with a Liberal party greatly superior in numbers, but too divided to be easily combined in any movement for its overthrow. Mr. Disraeli therefore continued to employ the tactics which had hitherto enabled him to escape a fatal defeat, dexterously evading the questions on which the opposition would

be likely to unite against him. The Irish and Scotch Reform Bills had still to be passed, and the desirableness that they should be carried through parliament by the same administration that had superintended the English Bill formed a plausible excuse for the still farther retention of office by the ministry of a minority. It was a state of things wholly without parallel in the history of the country, but it was urged on behalf of the government that the circumstances in which they had been placed by the errors and divisions of their opponents were also unprecedented.

As the session had been formally opened in the autumn of 1867, the two houses had only to take up their business where they had left it and as they had left it. They commenced their sittings on Thursday, the 13th of February, on which day Mr. Disraeli with praiseworthy promptitude introduced a bill having for its object the more effectual prevention of corrupt practices at parliamentary elections. The plan he proposed was to create a court composed of three eminent members of the legal profession, with a salary of 2000*l.* per annum each, who were not only to decide on all election petitions, but to hear appeals from the decisions of revising barristers.

The health of Lord Derby had long been failing; his growing infirmities disabled him from discharging the duties of office with his wonted efficiency. His resignation had long been expected, and was formally announced on the 25th of February, in the Upper House by Lord Malmesbury, and in the Lower by his son, Lord Stanley. It was added that the Queen had commanded Mr. Disraeli to form, if possible, a new administration, and that he had accepted the task. An adjournment, as a matter of course, was agreed to in the Commons; but the Lords continued their sittings in order to pass a bill for the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act in Ireland. Mr. Disraeli carried out the commands that had been given him by inducing his colleagues to remain in office, with the exception of Lord Chelmsford, who was succeeded in the chancellorship by Lord Cairns. Of course he himself became first lord of the treasury, and Mr. Ward Hunt succeeded him as chancellor of the exchequer. When the House of Commons again met, on the Friday after the day of its adjournment, a further adjournment to the following Thursday was asked for by Lord Stanley, and somewhat reluctantly conceded by Mr. Gladstone.

Mr. Disraeli had attained the height of his ambition; he was now the foremost man in that very assembly which had once

covered him with shouts of derision. The alteration that had taken place in the *personnel* of the ministry brought with it little change in its policy. The infirmities of Lord Derby had for some time past prevented him from taking an active part in the direction of the government, and caused him to devolve the whole guidance of affairs on his lieutenant. The only real change, therefore, was, that Mr. Disraeli, who had all along been the real chief of his party, now became its recognised leader, no longer fettered by the necessity of consulting the nominal head of the government. If he felt elated by his elevation, he carefully concealed the feeling and spoke with the air of a man heavily oppressed by the burden laid on him. When he addressed the House of Commons for the first time after his appointment he said that he succeeded to the place and policy of the Earl of Derby, and would pursue a liberal policy; and when the House laughed at the statement, he qualified it by saying emphatically, a *truly* liberal policy; and when the House laughed still more loudly he explained that the policy he meant to describe by the term "liberal" was one that would not shrink from any changes required by the wants of the age, but he would never forget that it is our happy lot to dwell in an ancient and historic country, rich in traditionary influences that are the best security for order and liberty, and the most valuable element of our national character and strength.

Mr. Bouverie moved an adjournment, in order to enable him to express his opinions on the state of parties in the House. He asked, "Why are the Conservatives now in power? Simply because the Liberal party, though an undoubted majority in this House, and representing a vast preponderance of opinion in the country, does not deserve to be called a party. That may be an unpalatable truth, but it is a truth notwithstanding. We have leaders that won't lead, and followers that won't follow. Instead of an organised party, we are little better than a rabble."

When the legislature got fairly to work after the interlude caused by the changes that had taken place in the ministry, the affairs of Ireland demanded and obtained a large share of its attention. It was felt that the Fenian agitation was the outward symptom of a deep-seated social and political cancer, which must at any cost be eradicated. The subject was brought forward by Mr. Maguire, in a speech of remarkable force and eloquence. He proposed that the House should resolve itself into a committee to take into its immediate consideration the condition of Ireland. The motion was resisted by the ministry; who, in opposing it, clearly showed that,

while admitting the evils to which Ireland was a prey, they had no policy to propose which was calculated to deal with them effectually. In the course of the debate Mr. Gladstone let fall the word "disestablishment," and the thunders of applause which the expression elicited showed that a very large party in the House felt that the measure thus indicated was a necessary preliminary to the application of the other remedies for the chronic and inveterate maladies of Ireland, and made it evident that if Mr. Gladstone would propose it, he would obtain the strong, earnest, and united support of the great Liberal party. Mr. Disraeli, who followed him, met the enthusiastic demands of the opposition with a firm declaration of his determination to resist with all his power any attempts that might be made to overthrow the Irish Church, and with an ingenious argument in favour of the union between the Church and State. The debate was the most important of the session—we may almost say of the generation; it marked out the ground on which the two parties, now opposed to one another, were to fight out their battle. Mr. Maguire's motion was withdrawn; but in accordance with the views he had announced the leader of the opposition gave notice, amidst the loud cheers of his supporters, of his intention to move the following resolutions:—

"1. That in the opinion of this House it is necessary that the Established Church of Ireland should cease to exist as an establishment, due regard being had to all personal interests and to all individual rights of property.

"2. That, subject to the foregoing consideration, it is expedient to prevent the creation of new personal interests by the exercise of any public patronage, and to confine the operations of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners of Ireland to objects of immediate necessity or involving individual rights, pending the final decision of parliament.

"3. That a humble address be presented to her Majesty, humbly praying that, with a view to the purposes aforesaid, her Majesty will be graciously pleased to place at the disposal of parliament her interest in the temporalities of the archbishoprics and other ecclesiastical dignities and benefices in Ireland and in the custody thereof."

These resolutions were brought forward by Mr. Gladstone on Monday, the 30th of March. He began by formally moving that the acts relating to the Irish Church should be read. Whereupon, to the dismay of the House, Colonel Knox moved that the Act of Union should be read. Eventually it was agreed that only those

clauses of it relating to the Irish Church should be read, which was done accordingly. Mr. H. E. Snrtees requested that the Act of William and Mary prescribing the Coronation Oath should be read; and his request was complied with. Mr. Gladstone then moved that the House should go into committee on the resolutions of which he had given notice, after which Lord Stanley moved the following resolution:—

“That this House, while admitting that considerable modifications in the temporalities of the United Church in Ireland may, after the pending inquiry, appear to be expedient, is of opinion that any proposition tending to the disestablishment or disendowment of that church ought to be reserved for the decision of the new parliament.”

In speaking on his motion Mr. Gladstone said: “If I were asked as to my expectation of the issue of the struggle, I begin by frankly owning that I, for one, should not have entered into it unless I believed that the final hour was about to sound. I hope the noble lord will forgive me if I say that, before Friday last” (the day on which Lord Stanley gave notice of his resolution), “I thought the thread of the remaining life of the Irish Established Church was short. Since Friday last at half-past four o’clock, and since the few moments that he stood at the table, I regard it as shorter still. The issue is not in our hands. What we have had and have to do is to consider well and deeply before we take that first step in an engagement such as this; but, having entered into the controversy, we must quit ourselves like men, and make every effort to remove the scandal and calamity of the relations between England and Ireland, and use our best exertions to build up with the cement of honour and concord the noble fabric of the British empire.”

Lord Stanley advocated the resolution of which he had given notice on the ground that it would leave the action of the parliament that was about to be elected by the new and enlarged constituencies perfectly free and unfettered.

The resolution, and the government that put it forward, were severely assailed by their former colleague, Lord Cranbourne. He said that the leader of the opposition offered them a policy; the foreign secretary offered them a paltry excuse for delay. He maintained the principle of a state church, and would not desert that principle when applied to Ireland. He denounced the attitude assumed by ministers as being neither wise, firm, nor creditable; and as for the amendment of Lord Stanley, it was too clever by

half. He was prepared to meet the motion of Mr. Gladstone by a direct negative, but not to fight in the dark by supporting an amendment which if carried would merely keep the cards in the hands of ministers to shuffle just as convenience or exigency might suggest. On the following evening Mr. Gathorne Hardy defended the Irish Church in a speech powerfully, effectively, not only on account of its ability, but still more from the fervid and almost religious earnestness with which it was delivered. He said that the cry against it was a party cry, and that if it were abolished to-morrow, other grievances far more substantial would be put forward. Mr. Bright, in the course of the same evening, remarked that the impression left on the ministerial benches by the speech of Lord Stanley was far from comfortable, and that Mr. Hardy had endeavoured to neutralize it by a speech which at some future stage of the debate would probably be answered by the first minister of the crown. He said there was confusion and chaos in the House, a government in a minority, and an opposition that was no opposition at all. In approaching the consideration of the question before the House he declined to admit that the disendowment of the Irish Church would inflict wrong on the half million of members of the episcopal church in Ireland. That body had ludicrously failed as an engine of conversion. It had not made Catholics Protestants, but it had made Catholics more intensely Roman than they were in any other country of Europe. He urged that there was nothing dangerous nor terrible in the leap which the House was invited to take. If the effort were made, the hobgoblin would vanish, like *protection, the balance of power*, and many other things that used to frighten the Tory party. "In my opinion," said Mr. Bright, "the changes of our times are the glory of our times, and I believe that our posterity will look on them as the natural and blessed growth of truth and intelligence." On the third night Mr. Roebuck expressed a hope that the trick which had been played by the Liberal party in 1859 and 1866 would not again be resorted to. Mr. Disraeli, on the last night of the debate, talked oracularly of having fathomed a conspiracy between Ritualism and Popery to overthrow the throne. In his reply Mr. Gladstone stated that if his plans should be adopted, nearly two-thirds of the property of the Irish Church would remain in the hands of its ministers, and it would be placed in a position as free as any dissenting body in his country.

At the close of this, the fourth night of the debate, two divisions took place in which government was defeated by majorities of 60 and 56.

The Easter holidays had now arrived, and little work had been done in the course of the session. The late period at which it commenced, the illness of Lord Derby and his consequent absence from his place in the House of Lords, the long interval which had been asked and granted for carrying out the changes which his retirement necessitated, the debates on Mr. Maguire's motion and Mr. Gladstone's resolutions, had so occupied the time of the legislature, that, with the exception of the bill suspending the Habeas Corpus Act in Ireland, little had hitherto been effected. The Bribery Bill, the Bankruptcy Bill, the Irish Reform Bill—measures introduced by the government—were in a state of suspended animation; and even the army and navy estimates had been delayed beyond the usual time, the latter having been postponed till after Easter owing to the illness of Mr. Corry, the minister who had the charge of them. The indispensably necessary business had been pushed on at intervals as well as circumstances would allow.

At the close of the Easter vacation the House of Commons proceeded with the business of the session, the government giving no explanation of the course they intended to adopt. The budget was brought forward as usual. The necessity of making provision for the cost of the Abyssinian expedition made it impossible for Mr. Ward Hunt to propose any of those financial operations which under more propitious circumstances he might have attempted. The introduction of the budget was soon followed by the news that the Abyssinian army had been routed, Magdala taken, the Emperor Theodore had fallen by his own hands, the captives had been recovered, and Sir Robert Napier and his troops, having achieved all they were sent to accomplish, were on their way home again.

After a discussion extending over eleven nights, the House divided on Mr. Gladstone's first resolution on the 30th of April, when the numbers were:—

For Mr. Gladstone's resolution	...	...	...	330
Against	...	...	...	265
Majority against the government	...	...		65

Mr. Disraeli at once said that the vote at which the committee had now arrived had altered the relations between the government and the House of Commons; and as it would be necessary that they should consider their position, he proposed that the House

should adjourn to the following Monday—an arrangement adopted with Mr. Gladstone's concurrence, who, however, placed on the paper a notice pledging the House to go on with the second and third resolutions on Monday before proceeding with the committee of ways and means.

On the day named the premier announced the intentions of government to a densely crowded and eagerly expectant House. He stated that he had waited on the Queen, and laid before her the position of the government, of the different parties in the House and the country; and had concluded by telling her that the advice which the ministers were prepared to offer her was that she should dissolve parliament, and take the opinion of the country on the conduct of the government and on the question at issue. At the same time he had represented to her Majesty that there were important occasions on which it was desirable that the sovereign should not be embarrassed by personal claims; and that if she was of opinion that the question at issue could be more satisfactorily settled, and the interests of the country better promoted, by the immediate retirement of the present government from office, they were prepared to quit her service. He had then tendered his resignation to her Majesty, who took a day to consider what had been said to her, and then announced that it was her pleasure not to accept the resignation of her ministers, and declared her readiness to dissolve parliament as soon as the state of public business would permit. Under these circumstances she advised her Majesty that, although the representatives of the existing constituencies were no doubt as morally competent to decide on the question of the disestablishment of the Irish Church as the representatives of the new constituencies, still it was the opinion of ministers that every effort should be made for appealing, if possible, to the new constituencies; and he stated that if the government had the cordial co-operation of parliament, he was advised by those who were experienced in this matter that it would be possible to make arrangements by which the dissolution might take place in the coming autumn. With regard to the second and third resolutions on the Irish Church, having disapproved of the first, he of course disapproved of the second and third, which he looked upon as corollaries to the first. With a view to the despatch of business, however, he would not enter into protracted and formal discussions upon them, though he should offer them a hearty negative; but he would be happy to devote the earliest possible day at the disposal of the government for their consideration.

Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Lowe, and Mr. Bright, all condemned the course pursued by the government as unconstitutional, and contended that after the severe defeats they had sustained they had no right to recommend a dissolution, but ought at once to have given in their resignations. As it was, Mr. Disraeli, though really in a considerable minority, had the House of Commons as much under his control as if he was the leader of a large majority; for if they did not accept the measures he placed before them, he might allege that they had compelled him to make his appeal to the existing constituencies, in which case it would be necessary to dissolve the new parliament very soon after it had been called into existence, in order that the new constituencies might exercise the franchises that had been conferred on them. This was the rod which circumstances and his own dexterity had placed in the hands of the prime minister, by whom it was sure to be wielded with great effect. Several members tried to extract some pledge or explanation with regard to the power of dissolution with which the Queen had intrusted him; but these attempts were skilfully parried and put aside. Mr. Gladstone's two remaining resolutions were subsequently put and carried, ministers declining to divide against them. Then followed a scene such as has seldom been witnessed in the House of Commons. Mr. Aytoun, a Scotch member, not satisfied with the success of Mr. Gladstone's well-considered resolutions, insisted on adding to them a rider, that the Maynooth grant and the *regium donum* should be discontinued. In vain did Mr. Gladstone explain that this was a matter for after-consideration, and referred to his own previous declarations of approval of the course which this ill-timed motion indicated. Mr. Aytoun persisted, and the bone of contention he had thrown down brought out at once the differences of opinion that existed in the Liberal ranks. The ministers seeing that their work was being effectually done by their opponents, walked out of the House, leaving the opposition to fight out this civil war, which they did amid bellowing, screeching, cheering, yelling, and vehement gesticulation: and their anger was raised to the highest pitch, when Mr. Disraeli, who had now returned to the House, sarcastically remarked that his expectations had been realized, and that the gentlemen on the opposite side of the House were now quarrelling over their booty. The confused discussion ended in the adoption of the following rider to Mr. Gladstone's resolutions:—

"4. That when legislative effect shall have been given to the first resolution of this committee respecting the Established Church

in Ireland, it is right and necessary that the grant to Maynooth and the *regium donum* be discontinued, due regard being had to all personal interests."

The Scotch Reform Bill, which was being hurried through as speedily as possible, in order that it might pass before the dissolution, rendered necessary some important modifications of the English bill already passed. In order to give Scotland a fair share in the representation, the government proposed to increase the number of members in the House. It was generally felt that the number was already too great, and required diminution rather than increase. Mr. Baxter therefore moved, before the House went into committee on the bill, that it should be an instruction to the committee that, instead of adding to the number of the House, they should have power to disfranchise boroughs in England having by the census returns of 1861 fewer than 5000 inhabitants—a provision which would have the effect of disfranchising ten boroughs. Now one of the features of the Reform Bill of 1867, on which Mr. Disraeli had descanted with peculiar complacency, was that it did not disfranchise a single borough. This boast Mr. Baxter's amendment ruthlessly swept away; and therefore it was proposed by Sir R. Knightley that the ten seats required for Scotland should be obtained by taking a seat from every borough whose population was below 12,000. Mr. Disraeli at once submitted to the decision of the House that the number of its members should not be altered, and warmly advocated Sir R. Knightley's amendment. Mr. Gladstone on the other hand, supported Mr. Baxter's motion, which was carried against the government by 217 votes to 196. The same evening the government suffered a still more damaging defeat. Mr. Bouverie moved that the rate-paying clause should be struck out. This clause had been repeatedly upheld by the premier as a "vital principle" of the bill; when therefore it was struck out in a thin House by a majority of 22, Mr. Disraeli moved that progress should be reported, that the government might have time to consider the position in which this decision placed them. Here, then, was another ministerial crisis. It passed over, however, as easily as those that had preceded it. Mr. Disraeli stated, that in his opinion the decision of the House would seriously affect the operation of the Reform Act; in which the principle of the payment of rates was recognised as a condition of the possession of household suffrage in the United Kingdom; but he entertained a hope that he should be able to induce the committee to reconsider their determination, and with this view he intended to propose on

Monday the addition of a proviso, that no elector in Scotland should be allowed to exercise the franchise who was not rated to the poor and had not paid his rates. Before the day arrived a compromise had been made, and resolutions embodying it, moved by the Lord Advocate, were agreed to. The Irish Reform Bill, the Boundary Bill, the Registration Bill, the Bribery Bill, and other measures which it was thought necessary to pass before the dissolution, were pushed forward as rapidly as possible. Mr. Gladstone's Suspensory Bill passed the Commons without much further opposition; and though its rejection was moved in the Upper House by Earl Grey, and discussed in one of the ablest debates that has ever been carried on in that House, the amendment was defeated on a division by 192 votes to 97. During the concluding portion of the session two bills occupied a considerable share of the interest and attention of the House of Commons: the first of these was the Bribery Bill, with regard to which it was decided to revert to the plan originally proposed, that the jurisdiction of the House over these cases should be transferred to the judges; and in this shape the bill finally passed, in spite of a strong remonstrance made by Lord Chief Justice Cockburn in the name of the whole judicial bench. The other measure was the Foreign Cattle Bill, which, after having engaged a large share of the attention of the legislature almost from the commencement of the session, was finally talked out.

While parliament was engaged night after night in the exciting political game which was being played out between the two great parties, a measure of much public importance and utility made its way through both Houses with comparatively little notice—the bill which authorised the government to purchase the electric telegraphs from the various private companies by which they had hitherto been worked, and to unite them in one great national system. On the last day of July the business of parliament was sufficiently transacted to allow the appeal to be made to the new constituencies; and it was prorogued with a view to its dissolution. Some months, however, had yet to elapse before the necessary preliminaries could be settled, the various changes required by the acts lately passed be carried out, and the electoral struggle actually commence. The manifesto of the ministerialist party was published by the prime minister in the shape of an address to the electors of Buckingham, which was of course intended not for them only, but for the great body both of county and borough electors throughout the kingdom.

It commenced, as was natural and allowable, with a glorification

of his own cabinet. They had dealt with the vexed question of parliamentary reform by a settlement broad in its principles, large and various in its provisions, and calculated in their opinion to animate the spirit of the community, and add strength and stability to the State. They had obtained the sympathy and confidence of the various courts and powers, and used the influence of England for the maintenance of peace and the interests of civilization. They had vindicated the honour of the crown and the cause of humanity and justice in Abyssinia. They had materially increased the strength of the navy, much advanced the defences of the country, armed the soldiers with an admirable weapon, rendered the military service popular, and, by placing the control of the military expenditure in the hands of a single individual, commenced a reform which would conduce to greater economy both in peace and war. They had baffled in Ireland a conspiracy formed by foreign military adventurers, and had pursued a policy of sympathy, conciliation, and justice towards that country.

Under such circumstances Mr. Disraeli had thought that he and his colleagues might have been allowed tranquilly to wind-up the business of the session, and then to have asked, in accordance with the provisions of the great statute which had just been passed, the public verdict on their conduct. He complained, however, that this natural current of affairs had been interrupted, and that the leader of the opposition had seized the occasion of an expiring parliament, which had proclaimed its inadequate representation of the country, to recommend a change in the fundamental laws of the realm, and to propose a dissolution of the union between Church and State. He announced that her Majesty's government would offer an uncompromising resistance to this policy.

As the views of the leader of the Conservative party with regard to the questions which were to decide the fate of the government, and much else besides, were stated in this document with energetic terseness, we place them before the reader in the words of its author:—

“It is urged that in the present instance the application of the new policy is to be only partial; and that only one portion of her Majesty's dominions, Ireland, is for the present to be submitted to the revolution; and on this plea, that in Ireland the members of the Established Church form only a minority of the population.

“If this numerical test is to be accepted, its application cannot be limited to Ireland; and if, in a country of entire toleration, a

local instead of an imperial gauge be adopted, the religious integrity of the community will be frittered away.

"Instead of Ireland being made an exception to the fundamental condition of our constitution, there are many secondary reasons why the Established Church should be maintained in that country.

"Its subversion would aggravate religious hostility and party rancour; would suppress a resident class of men whose social virtues are conducive, as all agree, to the welfare of the country; and would farther diminish the security of property in a land where its tenure and enjoyment are not as unquestioned as they hitherto have been in other parts of her Majesty's dominions.

"But even in Great Britain the spoliation of the Church in Ireland would not be without its effect. Confiscation is contagious; and when once a community has been seduced into plunder, its predatory acts have seldom been single.

"There are, however, even weightier reasons why this new policy should be resisted.

"The religious liberty which all her Majesty's subjects now happily enjoy is owing to the Christian Church in this country having accepted the principles of the Reformation, and recognised the supremacy of the sovereign as the representative of the State, not only in matters temporal, but in matters ecclesiastical. This is the stronghold of our spiritual freedom. So long as there is in this country the connection through the medium of a Protestant sovereign between the State and the National Church, religious liberty is secure.

"That security is now assailed by various means and on different pleas; but, amidst the discordant activity of many factions, there moves the supreme purpose of one power. The philosopher may flatter himself he is advancing the cause of enlightened progress; the sectarian may be roused to exertion by anticipations of the downfall of ecclesiastical systems. These are transient efforts; vain and passing aspirations. The ultimate triumph, were our Church to fall, would be to that power which would substitute for the authority of our sovereign the supremacy of a foreign prince; to that power with whose traditions, learning, discipline, and organization our Church alone has hitherto been able to cope, and that too only when supported by a determined and devoted people."

This manifesto was issued on the 1st of October; that of Mr. Disraeli's great rival was dated on the 9th of the same month,

and addressed to the electors of the South-western division of Lancashire, for the representation of which Mr. Gladstone was a candidate. It stated with great clearness the policy of his party and the issue placed before the constituencies of the empire, of which he gave the following concise summary:—

“Rest as we are, by common consent we cannot. Endowment of all, after the events of the last session, is out of the question. Retrenchment or mutilation of the existing Church by reduction of its spiritual offices has been proposed by a royal commission; but I do not learn from the latest and most authentic declarations of the ministry, that they adopt that, or indeed any other, method of proceeding. We of the opposition, gentlemen, have done our part. The matter now rests with you. One path at least lies before you, broad, open, and well defined. One policy has advocates who do not shrink from its avowal. It is the policy of bringing absolutely to an end the civil establishment of the Church of Ireland. It has received the solemn sanction of the representatives whom the nation chose in 1865. For this line of action, the only one just, and the only one available, I confidently ask your approval.”

A man who occupied a very prominent and important place in our history, passed away on the 7th of May, in the 90th year of his age—Henry Lord Brougham and Vaux: H. Brougham, as he continued to the last, in defiance of all etiquette, to sign himself. It is hardly possible for those who have not seen this extraordinary man in the days of his matured power, fully to comprehend the amazing energy, the indomitable perseverance, the indefatigable industry, with which he laboured and fought against that Tory domination which pressed so heavily on this country from the close of the war in 1815 to the end of 1830, or the audacity with which he braved the displeasure of the Court of George IV. in defending his Queen. These efforts won him the honour of representing the county of York, and made him one of the first men in the kingdom. When the vehement tribune of the people was suddenly transformed into lord high chancellor he discharged his new functions with marvellous diligence. But the atmosphere of the Lower House was more congenial to his ardent temperament than the calm and quiet dignity of the Upper Chamber. And when he lost the chancellorship, he felt and showed that his proper place was not that of a peer; for he displayed a restless and consuming energy that for want of fitting employment oftentimes expended itself in ways that tended to lower his character and impair his reputation. But the services that he rendered during his younger days and

during the period of his chancellorship entitle him to the gratitude of his country, and secure him a prominent place in the history of England.

The proclamation announcing the dissolution of the parliament, and summoning the electors to choose their representatives, was issued on the 11th of November. The electoral battle was attended by many casualties. Mr. Mill was replaced at Westminster by an eminent bookseller; Baron Rothschild was rejected by the city of London; Mr. Roebuck was beaten at Sheffield by Mr. Mundella; Mr. Gladstone, defeated in South-West Lancashire, was returned for Greenwich without either expense or solicitation. Mr. Milner Gibson was rejected at Ashton-under-Lyne; Sir Wentworth Dilke lost the seat he had occupied for Wallingford, but his son was elected for Chelsea, though opposed by Dr. Russell, the able and popular historian of the Crimean war; Mr. Miall unsuccessfully contested Bradford, but was shortly afterwards elected to represent it. The result was, on the whole, a very decided majority for the opposition, though there were many remarkable Conservative victories; none of which perhaps caused greater surprise than the return of eight representatives of that party for the county of Lancaster, being the whole of the representatives of the various divisions of the county, once foremost in Liberalism among the counties of England. Scarcely less remarkable or more unexpected were the Conservative triumphs at Bolton, Blackburn, and several other boroughs in the manufacturing districts. Another circumstance falsified a great number of predictions that had been very confidently uttered. The effect of the new Reform Bill, under which this election took place, was to place the majority of the votes in the greater number of constituencies in the hands of the working classes, and it had been argued that they would make use of the power thus confided to them to send to parliament men of violent and revolutionary views and opinions. There were, indeed, a good number of what were termed working men's candidates; many of them, too, men of considerable power, and able to throw much valuable light on many questions discussed in the House of Commons—Mr. Ernest Jones, Mr. Mason Jones, Mr. Greening, Mr. Beales, Dr. Kenealy, Mr. Hartwell, Mr. Odger, Mr. Bradlaugh. But they were all completely defeated, and the House of Commons actually returned was the wealthiest House of Commons that had ever assembled, and very far indeed from being an assembly likely to yield to violent or revolutionary impulses, or to make headlong and dangerous changes.

The policy of the opposition was supported by a majority of something like 120 in the new parliament. The only question therefore for ministers to consider was, whether they should undergo an inevitable defeat, or resign at once. This question was discussed at a cabinet council held on Tuesday, the 1st of December, and decided in favour of the latter alternative. Mr. Gladstone was sent for to form a new administration. He had little difficulty in executing this task, and it was soon announced that he had succeeded in forming a ministry of which the following were the chief members:—

First Lord of the Treasury ...	... Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone.
Lord Chancellor ...	... Lord Hatherley.
Lord President of the Council ...	... Earl de Grey.
Lord Privy Seal ...	... Earl of Kimberley.
Chancellor of the Exchequer ...	... Mr. Lowe.
Home Secretary ...	... Mr. Bruce.
Foreign Secretary ...	... Earl of Clarendon.
Colonial Secretary ...	... Earl Granville.
War Secretary ...	... Mr. Cardwell.
Indian Secretary ...	... Duke of Argyll.
President of the Board of Trade ...	... Mr. Bright.
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster ...	... Lord Dufferin.
Postmaster-general ...	... The Marquis of Hartington.
First Lord of the Admiralty ...	... Mr. Childers.
Lord Lieutenant of Ireland ...	... Earl Spencer.
Chief Secretary for Ireland ...	... Mr. Chichester Fortescue.
Woods and Forests ...	... Mr. A. H. Layard.

Few governments have ever been more popular than this administration at the time of its accession to office. This was chiefly due to the presence in it of Messrs. Gladstone and Bright, in whom the overwhelming majority of the nation had great confidence, and who on every occasion in which they appeared in public were objects of the warmest demonstrations of the favour and confidence with which they were regarded.

The new parliament was opened by royal commission on Thursday, December the 10th. The swearing-in of members and other preliminary formalities having been gone through, and the motions rendered necessary by the acceptance of office on the part of the new ministers having been duly made and carried, the House rose for the Christmas vacation.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE GLADSTONE MINISTRY.

THE business of the session of 1869 commenced on Tuesday, the 16th of February, and on the 1st of March the new premier, according to notice duly given, introduced his great measure for the disestablishment and partial disendowment of the Irish Church, in a speech of three hours' duration; which Mr. Disraeli justly described as eloquent, full, adequate, and not containing one unnecessary word.

The plan which this speech explained was the following:—

On the 1st of January, 1871, the Irish Church would cease to be recognised by the State; though the date might be altered if the House should think it necessary to change it.

On the second reading of the measure, subsequently fixed for the 18th of the month, the technical disendowment was to *commence.

On the final passing of the bill, the Irish Ecclesiastical Commission was to come to an end, and to be succeeded by a new commission which was to carry out the transition from the present state of the church to that of a free episcopal church. During the transitional period no new vested interests were to be created.

The crown was to resign the right of appointing Irish bishops, and the Irish bishops were to lose their seats in the House of Lords.

A synodal or governing body, representing the clergy and the laity of the Irish Church, was to be elected; and, after being recognised by the queen in council as a duly constituted representative body, was to be legally incorporated by the government.

The union between the Churches of England and Ireland was to be formally dissolved, all the Irish ecclesiastical courts to be

abolished, and the ecclesiastical law to remain provisionally in force as a voluntary compact, until it should be altered by the Church itself.

These were the principal provisions of the bill. There were many others, relating to vested interests, to the fulfilment of duties, to the principles on which the property of the Church should be divided, the administration of it for the future, the disposal of the churches, and the management and appropriation of the revenues which would remain after all claims had been satisfied. Mr. Gladstone thus concluded the speech by which the measure was introduced to the House of Commons:—

“This measure is in every sense a GREAT measure; great in its principles, great in the multitude of its dry, technical, but, nevertheless, interesting details, and great as a testing measure, for it will show for one and all of us of what mettle we are made. Upon us all it brings a great responsibility. We upon this bench are especially chargeable—nay, deeply guilty, if we have either dishonestly, or even prematurely or unwisely, challenged so gigantic an issue. I know well the punishments that follow rashness in public affairs, and that ought to fall on those men—those Phaetons in politics—that, with hands unequal to the task, attempt to guide the Chariot of the Sun. But the responsibility passes beyond us, and rests on every man who has to take part in the discussion and the decision on this bill. Every man approaches the discussion under the most solemn obligation to raise the level of his vision and extend its scope in proportion to the greatness of the matter in hand. The working of our constitutional government is itself on its trial; for I do not believe there ever was a time when the wheels of legislative machinery were set in motion, under conditions of peace and order and constitutional regularity, to deal with a question greater and more profound. And more especially, sir, is the credit and fame of this great assembly involved. This assembly, which has inherited through many ages the accumulated honours of brilliant triumphs, of peaceful but courageous legislation, is now called upon to address itself to a task which would indeed have demanded all the best energies of the very best among your fathers and ancestors. I believe it will prove to be worthy of the task. Should it fail, even the fame of the House of Commons will suffer disparagement; should it succeed, even that fame, I venture to say, will receive no small, no insensible addition....”

Mr. Disraeli emphatically declared that the opinion of the

opposition remained unchanged ; they still believed that disestablishment was a political error, and that disendowment, especially when accompanied by secularization, was mere and sheer confiscation. He said that under ordinary circumstances he should have opposed the introduction of the bill ; but that looking to the verdict of the country at the general election, which he interpreted to mean that Mr. Gladstone should have an opportunity of dealing with the question of the Irish Church, he thought that the premier ought not to be precluded from submitting his policy to the House, and he therefore advised his friends not to oppose the motion for the introduction of the measure ; but he asked for a delay of three weeks before the second reading. This delay Mr. Gladstone declined to concede ; and it was ultimately agreed that the second reading should be proposed on the 18th of March.

Perhaps an abler and more eloquent debate never was carried on in the House of Commons than that which arose on the second reading of this measure. Not to mention speakers of less importance who took part in it, there was Mr. Disraeli, who moved that the bill should be read that day six months, and who, though of course aware that he was playing a losing game, delivered one of the most forcible speeches he ever pronounced in the House of Commons. On the same side Dr. Ball spoke with the volubility for which his countrymen are remarkable, and with an ability which threw into the shade all the able efforts he had previously made. Mr. Miall delivered his views on the other side with the authority which his long and consistent advocacy of the change now about to be effected gave him, and was listened to by all parties with a respectful attention seldom accorded by the House to one known as a strong partisan. Mr. Bright gave the measure the support of his high reputation and splendid eloquence. The interest he took in the question made him surpass himself, and the conclusion of his speech, in which he claimed for the bill before the House the support of the Supreme Being, as to a measure which was in accordance with His glorious attributes of truth, justice, and mercy, was delivered with a manifest earnestness which made perhaps as profound an impression as anything that ever was uttered within the walls of parliament. He was followed by an antagonist in every way worthy of him—Sir Roundell Palmer, whose conscientious conviction on this question had caused him to decline the chancellorship and a peerage, to which the services he had rendered to the Liberal party had given him an undeniable claim. He commanded the attention to which his high character

and the noble sacrifice he had made, no less than the force and eloquence with which he urged his opinions, entitled him. Admitting the existence of the discontent, he denied that the remedy proposed by the government was the right one. Admitting that the existence of the Established Church in Ireland was a grievance, he argued that the grievance might be removed without confiscation. He was answered by the Solicitor-general, Sir J. Coleridge, who, after a brief and respectful reply to the argument of Sir R. Palmer, applied himself to the evidently more congenial task of pointing out the necessity that existed for the measure, and the advantages it was calculated to produce. The case for the bill was ingeniously and ably put by Mr. Lowe, who met the powerful argument of Sir R. Palmer by asking the House if they would consent to disestablish the Irish Church and to leave it in possession of 16,000,000*l.* worth of property, without connection with the State and without check even from the ecclesiastical courts. He urged that the effect of such a settlement would be to found a theocracy of tremendous power—a fresh element of anarchy in Ireland. Replying to some arguments which Dr. Ball had urged against voluntarism, he said that if they wanted to see the voluntary system in operation, it might be seen working most effectually in Ireland. There was to be seen the spectacle of the state church on the one side, and the nation on the other. There the state church was not the national church and the national church not the state church. Whatever religious life existed in Ireland was to be found where the voluntary system prevailed, while coldness and apathy existed in the richly endowed districts of Ireland. It was said that the question at issue was a religious one, and that the Church was “a bulwark against Popery.” But it was no part of the duty of the government to raise bulwarks against any religion. Mr. Walpole spoke amidst the attention that a high and just reputation, combined with great amiability, is sure to command in the House of Commons, and thus summed up his objections to the measure: “It will, for the first time in our history, destroy the securities hitherto taken by the state for the extension of the ordinances of religion to all parts of the country, and divert the funds devoted to that purpose to other purposes for which they were never intended. It will be the first step towards ecclesiastical communism. It will unsettle the laws of ecclesiastical property in England and Scotland, and perhaps too of all other kinds of property, but especially of corporation property. It will overthrow a solemn compact between two inde-

pendent legislatures. It will impede religious progress and stir up endless discord in Ireland." Of all the speeches against the bill, decidedly the most outspoken was that of Mr. Gathorne Hardy, delivered towards the close of the long debate. He could discover no reason for this attack on the Irish Church but jealousy like that which animated Haman. He denied that it was a badge of conquest; he rather regarded it as an imperial light, as a recognition by the executive of the superior tenderness of the Almighty, as a token of the Protestantism of the sovereign, as a keeping alive in the dark places of Ireland the lamp of the Reformation. He maintained that the bill, instead of restoring peace and concord in Ireland, would revive agitation and increase discontent. He ran rapidly over the chief features of the disendowment scheme, in order to show that they would fail to soften the irritation of those who would feel themselves specially aggrieved by the measure. He said that the gift of churches and glebes called for no gratitude. The purchase of the tithe rent-charge was a puzzle, the treatment of Maynooth a mockery, the church body a delusion, the proposed disposal of the surplus for the foundation of new religious endowments, and their seizure for imperial purposes, both violations of the pledges of last year. He ended by drawing a highly coloured picture of the condition of Ireland, in which he represented the institutions of the country as satisfactory, freedom complete, law as justly administered as in England; but the people discontented without any real cause, sympathising with crime, and influenced, not for good, by the priesthood. He concluded, amidst the loud cheering of the opposition, by insisting that an interval of peace and industry, and not a destructive measure such as that which was now brought forward was the real panacea for the evils under which Ireland was suffering.

It was close on one o'clock on the fourth evening of the debate that Mr. Gladstone at length rose to make his reply. He began it by remarking that Mr. Hardy had shown his fitness for a task which Burke had disclaimed—that of drawing an indictment against a whole nation. Yet even in a picture of the Irish people so unjust as to amount to a libel, serious evils were admitted, for which Mr. Hardy had no remedy. But the government, recognising the existence of an Irish question, the result of years of previous misgovernment, had a remedy which they proposed of necessity piecemeal. He passed over the comments that had been made on the details of the bill as being irrelevant to the

question of the second reading; only he intimated that the payment of the Maynooth grant and the *regium donum* out of the church property were open questions. Running over the four nights' debate he pointed out that no rival plan had been suggested. The proposals of the commission had been entirely thrown aside, and the opposition had either no plan at all, or else the old plan of levelling up. The only plan that had been put forward was that of Sir Roundell Palmer—disestablishment with little or no disendowment. This plan Mr. Gladstone discussed at considerable length. He said that he differed altogether from the ideas of church property on which it was founded. When property had been given for purposes that had not been attained and could not be attained, it was the duty of the legislature to see that it was not wasted, and when it became mischievous, to take it away. But he took a much larger view of church trusts, holding that this property had been given for the general benefit of the nation.

The House divided about twenty minutes past two o'clock, when the numbers were:—

For the second reading	...	...	...	...	...	368
Against	...	...	...	...	...	250
Majority for the government						118

A late commencement of the session, and an early Easter, somewhat retarded the general legislation of the House of Commons. There were a great number of bills, but they were only in the bud. Many of these were government measures—numerous Poor Law Bills, which Mr. Goschen was trying to pass; an Endowed Schools Bill, which Mr. Forster was striving with all his might to push forward; the Mutiny Bills, urgently demanding renewal; the University Tests Bill, promoted vigorously, though with small chance of success during this session, by Mr. Coleridge; the Bankruptcy Bill, so often brought forward by different administrations, and still likely to be deferred; the army and navy estimates all in arrear. Add to this the likelihood that the discussion on the Irish Church Bill in committee would be so prolonged as almost to monopolise the government nights of the session; and withal Ireland still so agitated by Fenianism as to render it not improbable that another Coercion Bill would have to be passed. Such were the prospects with which the Houses of parliament returned to their work after the Easter vacation.

It does not fall within the province of this work to follow

the fortunes of the Irish Church Bill through committee, or to relate the attempts, successful or unsuccessful, that were made to amend it. The bill went forward more rapidly than could have been expected considering the magnitude of the changes it wrought, and the hostility with which it was regarded. This was partly due to the circumstance that the word had been given to the members of the ministerial side to leave the task of answering the speeches against the bill to ministers. Attempts to talk against time were foiled as much by the silence of the ministerialists as by the hopelessness of defeating the measure, and the manifest inutility of prolonging the resistance made to it. Thus on the last day of May the question of the third reading of the measure was brought forward, and after a dreary debate the House divided at one o'clock, when the numbers were:—

For the third reading	...	...	...	...	...	361
Against	...	...	...	...	...	247
						<hr/>
Majority for ministers	...	...	...	...	...	114

And now came the question, so often asked with regard to many previous measures, what will the Lords do with the bill? It was well known that if the members of the Upper House had felt themselves fully at liberty to vote according to their wishes, it would have been rejected in that assembly by a majority almost as great as that by which it was carried in the Lower House. But the Peers had so often experienced the evil results of setting themselves against the clearly pronounced opinion of the people, that it was commonly expected that they would give way with a good grace, and pass a bill which had come up from the Commons by a majority that rendered resistance to the popular will evidently hopeless. Nevertheless, there was a strong party in the Upper House determined at any risk to vote against what they regarded as a destructive inroad on the constitution. The discussions were sure to derive additional interest and animation from the circumstance that the Irish prelates who had seats in the House were likely to take an earnest part in the debates on a measure which involved their political extinction. The English prelates, too, could hardly be silent with regard to a change which so strongly affected the sister church, and must be very displeasing to their most reverend and right reverend brethren. The bill was read a first time as a matter of course. The question of the second reading was proposed in a very full House on Monday,

June the 14th. The ministers themselves seemed to bring forward with reluctance a measure excluding some of their colleagues from the seats they occupied in the House. Lord Granville, pale, agitated, and nervous, performed the work of explaining its nature with a pain he could not conceal. The other ministers by their countenances and attitudes seemed to show that they shared the feelings of their leader. The Archbishop of Canterbury gave his opinion on the question with a dignity and moderation that did honour to his high place. He said, "The episcopal bench intend in this crisis to do what they consider in their consciences to be wisest and best; agreeing neither with those who urge them to accept the measure as it stands, nor with those who advise them to reject it without consideration. I was glad when I heard the hope held out to us that any amendments made by your lordships would be seriously considered by the government and the House of Commons. The curse of Ireland has been the constant religious and political agitation on which the voluntary system subsists, and it is my earnest desire not to encourage another agitation of the sort in that country. Your lordships have been told, that if you give the bill a second reading, you will only show yourselves powerless as a branch of the legislature; but the men who say that are the very persons whose action would reduce you to powerlessness. I, in common with the other members of the episcopal bench, am sincerely attached to the Irish Church. We have the same truths at heart, and we desire the union that exists between it and the English Church to be continued, because we feel that the blow that falls on the Irish Church also falls on ourselves. Therefore, although we do not approve of the bill in its present shape, we desire that it may be fairly considered, and, if possible, so altered and amended as to be converted into a good measure."

In the course of this debate Lord Derby addressed the House. Those who most differed from his opinions could not refuse the homage of their admiration to the talents, the consistency, and the earnestness of the veteran statesman as he protested against a measure which seemed to him fraught with certain destruction to the highest and holiest interests of his country. "My lords," he said, after having lifted up against the measure the feeble remnants of a voice which once rang through that hall,—“my lords, I am an old man, and, like many of your lordships, past the allotted span of threescore years and ten. My official life is at an end, my political life is nearly closed, and my natural life cannot be long.” He thus

concluded his denunciation of the bill: "If it be for the last time that I have the honour of addressing your lordships, I declare that it will be to my dying day a satisfaction that I have been able to lift up my voice against the adoption of a measure the political impolicy of which is equalled only by its moral iniquity." This was the last speech that the great earl delivered. His work was done; all that for which he had so long fought was passing away; the democratic deluge he had so long apprehended had entered. He lived to witness the passing of the bill for the disestablishment of the Irish Church, but not to watch the operation of the dreaded measure.

The discussion was carried on with that ability which, on nights of great debate, generally distinguishes the oratory of the House of Lords. The division took place at three o'clock on the morning of June 19th in the fullest House that ever assembled, there being no fewer than three hundred and twenty-five peers who recorded their votes personally, besides eighteen who paired. The two English archbishops stood near the throne, and looked on, while the division was taking place. The Archbishop of Dublin, with thirteen English and two Irish bishops, voted against it. One prelate alone, the Bishop of St. David's, voted with the government. Bishop Wilberforce was prevented by a mistake from going with him. When the numbers were reckoned, they were found to be:—

Contents	179
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Majority		33

So far the measure was safe; but it still had to pass through a committee, the majority of whose members regarded it with a disfavour bordering on detestation. A preliminary debate took place on the question of concurrent endowment, led off by Earl Grey, who strongly condemned the voluntary system, and contended that the Roman Catholics and the Presbyterians should be endowed out of the revenues of the Irish Establishment; and in order to carry out his views, proposed the postponement of the consideration of the preamble; but, though supported by the Bishops of Oxford and St. David's, he withdrew his motion in deference to a very generally expressed opinion against it. Then the bill went into committee. It was there laboriously considered and freely amended; seldom, perhaps never, have the lords expended more pains on any measure than on this; and the government showed every disposition to

conciliate them, and even to encourage them to alter the bill with a view to its substantial improvement. On the morning of July 7th it passed through the committee, who, in the opinion of the Archbishop of Canterbury, had made "a good bill of it." Others thought they had greatly injured its efficiency. Numerous amendments had been introduced, giving, or at least designed to give, better terms to the disestablished and disendowed church, and the question of the disposal of the surplus revenues of that church was relegated to a future session.

While the fate of the bill was still in suspense, Earl Russell had introduced a bill for legalizing life peerages. It had passed through committee, and was brought forward for the third reading. Lord Malmesbury thereupon moved an amendment, that it should be read a third time that day three months, which was carried by a majority of twenty-nine; thus increasing the unpopularity of the Peers, by cutting off all hope of such a strengthening of the liberal element in the House of Lords as might enable the government to carry its measures without serious mutilation.

The third reading of the Irish Church Bill came before the House of Lords on the 12th of July. Lord Clancarty proposed that it should be read a third time that day three months, but withdrew his motion at the instance of Lord Derby, who urged that it would be better to throw on the House of Commons the responsibility of rejecting the "reasonable amendments" which their lordships had made in the bill. Some important changes were effected in it. A motion of Lord Devon's, setting aside an amendment in virtue of which the Irish bishops were to retain their seats in the House during their lives, was carried by 108 to 82 votes. A proviso proposed by Lord Stanhope, the object of which was to purchase residences and glebe-houses for the archbishops, bishops, and clergy of the Roman Catholic church, and for the ministers of the Presbyterian body, was supported by Lords Houghton, Russell, and Westbury; and though opposed on behalf of the Catholics by Lord Granard, and on behalf of the government by Lord Granville, it was carried by 121 to 114. The bill then passed; Lord Rodesdale handing in a protest from Lord Derby.

While the struggle was going on in the House of Lords the Liberal party out of doors remained judiciously quiet, only intimating their wish that the bill should pass unchanged in very measured language; but no sooner was it ended than they began to agitate the country strongly in favour of the bill as it originally

stood. At Manchester the executive committee of the National Reform Union held a meeting under the presidency of Mr. George Wilson, the veteran chairman of the Anti-Corn-Law League, and resolved that all the branches of the union should be invited to meet for the purpose of passing resolutions and sending up petitions against the amendments of the Lords. At Bradford an open-air meeting, said to have been attended by between 10,000 and 15,000 persons, was called by the mayor in compliance with a requisition presented to him. Large and important meetings were held at Leeds, Sheffield, Edinburgh, and a great number of other towns in all parts of the kingdom.

On the evening of the 15th of July Mr. Gladstone explained the course which the government proposed to take with respect to the Lords' amendments. His proposals were adopted with the exception of a few modifications, which he consented to make in compliance with the representations of Sir R. Palmer and others. The further consideration of the Lords' amendments was adjourned.

Meanwhile the agitation out of doors was industriously kept up. Deputations from the various places where meetings had been held waiting on Mr. Gladstone with promises of support and earnest exhortations to resist the amendments of the Lords, were assured by him that the government would stand by their engagements, and maintain the principles of the bill, but would at the same time give due consideration to all that could be urged in favour of the amendments that had been made in it. Meetings continued to be held in London and in most of the large towns of the empire for the double purpose of inducing the government to insist and the Lords to yield.

The bill came back to the Upper House on the evening of the 20th of July. The debate was long and warm. Earl Grey attacked the government with more than his voted vehemence. Earl Russell, though on the whole supporting them, spoke with some acerbity. Lord Shaftesbury, after announcing that he intended to vote with ministers, in order to prevent worse consequences, denounced the bill as the most violent and revolutionary measure ever submitted to parliament since the Reformation. The Lord Chancellor spoke with a warmth and asperity that strongly contrasted with his usually mild demeanour; and the violence of the discussion culminated in a speech from Earl Winchilsea, who talked rampant nonsense till he was pulled down by some of his friends. The House had not recovered from its excitement when the

division took place, by which the amendments made in the preamble by the Lords and disagreed with by the Commons were maintained by a majority of seventy-eight. Lord Granville at once moved the adjournment of the debate, to allow him an opportunity of consulting his colleagues in reference to the course they would pursue in consequence of this decision, but two days after, he announced that a conference had taken place between Lord Cairns and himself, at which a compromise had been effected. It was agreed that the bill should come into operation, as originally intended, on the 1st of January 1871; and some other slight alterations were made, rather calculated to save the honour of the House of Lords than to alter the character of the measure or benefit the Irish Church. The proposed compromise was willingly accepted by the opponents of the measure, who were weary of an opposition evidently hopeless, and glad to escape the responsibility which the rejection of the bill would have involved. The Earl of Bandon and the Bishop of Tuam delivered a formal testimony against the bill in the name of the Protestants of Ireland; but it was now safe, and all that remained to be done was, for the Commons to sanction the compromise which the government had effected. Thus they did on the evening of the 23rd of July. Mr. Gladstone explained the nature and effect of the changes that had been made in the measure, the chief of which was the commutation, the effect of which would be to throw an additional charge of a quarter of a million on the fund to be placed at the disposal of the commissioners. He congratulated the House on the satisfactory character of the settlement; praised the moderation and ability with which the debates had been conducted on both sides of the House; eulogised Lords Granville and Cairns for the manner in which they had negotiated the compromise; and concluded by expressing an earnest hope that the now disestablished church would develop qualities which it had not displayed in the days of its establishment, that a new career would open before her, and that God would speed her forward in the fulfilment of her high mission. Sir Roundell Palmer expressed his satisfaction that the question was at last settled. Mr. Disraeli silenced the murmurs of his supporters by declaring that the compromise was a wise, well-considered, and conciliatory arrangement. On the 26th of July the royal assent was given, and the bill became law.

The political storm was followed by a political calm. The energy of parliament, so long kept on the stretch, seemed at once to collapse. Mr. Gladstone's health gave way. He was obliged to

absent himself for some time from the sittings of the House, and came back looking fearfully ill, and scarcely equal to the task of making a short explanation. Much necessary business was pressed forward as rapidly as possible, and several measures of no small value were passed. The Assessed Rating Act, which did away a grievance irritating to thousands, was not seriously opposed even by those members of the Conservative party who the year before had regarded it as a most objectionable measure. The bankruptcy question, so often brought forward, was at length settled in a manner calculated to promote the interests of the honest trader. The abolition of imprisonment for debt was effected. A Cattle Disease Bill, and the repeal of the fire-insurance duties, two highly useful measures, were also carried. Thus the first parliament elected after that great extension of the franchise, which had been regarded with such alarm, and which the head of the ministry under whose auspices it was carried, described as a leap in the dark, had laboured soberly, diligently, wisely; and had certainly not shown the slightest tendency to favour that partial legislation for the working classes which many persons had predicted would be the inevitable consequence of giving them the suffrage.

Soon after the prorogation of parliament, it was announced that, preparatory to the approaching disestablishment of the Irish Church, a synod would be summoned, to be composed of clergy and laity in equal numbers, which was to determine what the future constitution of that communion should be. This announcement was hailed with general satisfaction; and England as well as Ireland watched with interest the manner in which this body attempted to deal with the very difficult and delicate question referred to its consideration, which was, in fact, nothing less than the reconstitution of the Irish Episcopal Church.

It was well known to be the intention of ministers to follow up their Irish Church Act by another measure dealing with the Irish land question, and there was a general anxiety to learn the principles on which they would attempt to solve a problem that seemed to be even more difficult and delicate than that with which they had grappled in the preceding session. Of all the members of the government, Mr. Bright was the one who was supposed to have studied this question most deeply, and whose competence to deal with it was most widely acknowledged both in England and Ireland. When, therefore, it was announced that he was about to address his constituents early in this year, the desire to hear him was increased by the expectation that the speech would not so much be

an address to the men of Birmingham as a manifesto of the policy of the government with regard to the most important question of the coming session. And this anticipation was not disappointed. After referring to the Irish Church Act he thus spoke on the Irish land question:—

“What are the circumstances of Ireland, as they may be stated in a sentence or two? The land of that great island is, as you know, in the hands of very few proprietors. I suppose half the population of Ireland are cultivators of the soil; but unfortunately they are what are called tenants at will. The owners for generations past, with sundry exceptions which need not be mentioned, have done nothing for the cultivation of the soil. They have let the land at a given rent, and twice a year at least they have received the rent; and that is the chief part of the duty they have performed as regards their land. On the other hand, the tenants have done very little compared with what they might have done, though quite as much as could be expected from people who had no security for anything they might do. Thus the industry, the fortune, the home, the life itself, of the cultivating population have been at the mercy of the owner of the land and of his agents who had the management of his property. And there is another point—the owners are not the same people as the occupiers. I think that Mr. Huxley, who is a great authority, denies altogether—and I have no wish to dispute what he says—that there is any difference of race between the people of Ireland and the people of England. I hope that is true. I have always been of opinion that if there were any difference of race, the difference of condition arises ten thousand times more from a difference of treatment, from a difference of politics and law, than from any difference of race. But the occupiers and owners mostly differ very much also in religion; and although there is no reason why a Protestant landowner and a Catholic tenant, or a Catholic landowner and a Protestant tenant, might not be the best friends; yet, when we have had a perpetual war for two hundred years in Ireland on this very question of Protestantism and Catholicism, you may be quite sure that that has done something to poison the relations between the owner and the occupier of the soil. Then this proprietary right in Ireland has its origin mainly in confiscation, and has been created and was only to be justified by conquest. And in addition to the original evil, the proprietors had not sense enough to see that that evil was sufficient for them, but they added to it a hundred years of the most odious cruelty and persecution during the existence of the penal laws. Therefore the

original grievance was made ten times more bitter than it would otherwise have been by the persistent folly of the proprietary class, working as they did through a corrupt parliament in Ireland, and also through the governing power in Great Britain.

“Now in Ireland, as I dare say most of you know, land is not only the great industry, but, with some exceptions in the North of Ireland, it is almost the only industry of the country, and there has been an excessive competition for it, and the struggle for life and the means of living has placed the occupier almost at the mercy of the proprietor of the soil. Thus we have gone on through suspicion and hatred and wrong, and a social war has been waged in some parts, of the bitterest and most painful character; and at last parliament is called in, not merely to give any kind of right or justice to the tenants themselves, but it may be to secure the interests and the property of the proprietors of the land. I do not know myself whether, if I were an Irishman, I should be more anxious for legislation as a tenant than I should be for legislation as a landlord. I think it absolutely necessary for the United Kingdom that we should, if possible, put an end to the reign of discord in Ireland, and take away from us the disgrace of maintaining order by an armed force of police and military, I suppose seldom falling lower than 30,000 men. I consider this Irish land question one of the greatest and most difficult that was ever considered by an administrator, or that ever was submitted to a parliament.”

While the condition-of-Ireland question was thus receiving a full, careful, and enlightened attention, the condition-of-England question was demanding it no less imperatively. That pauperism, which the new poor-law seemed for the moment to have mastered, had for some time past been growing up again; and at the beginning of this year its increase in all parts of the kingdom, and especially in London, had become so portentous as to demand the careful and immediate attention of the government and the legislature. Returns made to the House of Commons, giving a “comparative statement of the number of paupers of all classes (except lunatic paupers in asylums, and vagrants) in receipt of relief on the last day in each week,” showed that the number of persons in receipt of relief in England and Wales, from the first week in November, 1868, to the corresponding week in November, 1869, had risen from 936,680 to 955,483. This increase was entirely in the number of out-door paupers, that of in-door paupers having slightly diminished, and was still going on. In other words, about

five per cent. of the population of England was dependent upon the compulsory contributions of the rest; and there was good reason to fear that the proportion would soon become larger. Such a state of things demanded an investigation of its causes, and an endeavour to remove them. One remedy was obvious enough, and had often been strongly pressed—the remedy of emigration. It would transfer that labour which could not find employment in England to colonies in which it was greatly needed. But there was a serious difficulty in the way of its application. Many of those who were reduced by the want of employment to the condition of paupers were accustomed to a kind of labour not required in the colonies. A Manchester weaver or spinner, for instance, would be a very helpless and useless being in the backwoods of Canada, or in the sheep-walks and gold-diggings of Australia; and it would be more for the interests of all parties that he should wait at home for better times, than that he should be deported to a colony where he would be as helpless and dependent as in the mother country.

The second session of the newly elected parliament was opened on the 10th of February, 1870. The royal message announced that a proposal would be made to the legislature to amend the laws relating to the occupation and acquisition of land in Ireland, in a manner adapted to the peculiar circumstances of the country, and calculated to bring about improved relations between the classes concerned in Irish agriculture, it also intimated that a bill had been prepared for the enlargement, on a comprehensive scale, of the means of national education. Two such measures must necessarily occupy a large share of the time devoted to legislation; nevertheless the message announced that other measures of great importance would be introduced by the government: bills for the improvement of the constitution and procedure of the superior tribunals both of original and appellate jurisdiction; for the settlement of the question of religious tests in the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge; for the extension of the incidence of rating, and for the placing of the collection of large sums raised locally for various purposes on a simple and uniform footing; for amending the laws regulating the granting of licenses for the sale of fermented and spirituous liquors; for regulating the succession of real property in case of intestacy; for amending the laws imposing certain disabilities on the members of trade combinations, which were complained of as pressing unfairly on them; and, lastly, for consolidating and improving the statutes relating to the merchant shipping.

Such was the legislative programme of the government.

Probably no previous administration had proposed to deal with so large a number of important questions in a single session. Mr. Bright illustrated the difficulty of the task they had undertaken by comparing it to the attempt to drive six omnibuses abreast of each other through Temple Bar. Mr. Forster suggested that the six omnibuses might safely follow one another; but the event showed that Mr. Bright had formed a more correct estimate of the difficulty and delicacy of the task which the government had undertaken. Mr. Gladstone, too, was perfectly well aware of the formidable nature of the work before him, at least if we may judge by the promptitude with which he introduced his Irish Land Bill. He asked leave to bring it in on Tuesday, 15th February. An immense audience had gathered to hear his explanation of the measure, which we give in the premier's own words, with such abridgment and condensation as the smallness of our space renders necessary:—

“In the first place, the bill proposes the enlargement of the power of the limited owner in regard both to lease and rate. Assistance will be given by loans of public money to occupiers disposed and able to purchase the cultivated lands now in their occupation where the landlords are willing to sell. Facilities will also be given to landlords, by means of loans, to prepare waste lands for occupation, by making roads and erecting necessary buildings; and to assist purchasers of reclaimed lands upon the security of the seller and buyer, or the provision of other security of an adequate nature. These transactions will be managed by the Board of Works in Dublin. With regard to occupation, the new law will be administered by a court of arbitration and a civil-bill court, with an appellate tribunal consisting of two, and in case of necessity three, judges of assize; the judges having power to reserve a case for a court for land causes in Dublin, to be composed of equity and common-law judges.

“At present there are four descriptions of holdings in Ireland which I have thought it my duty to keep specially in view. The first of these is known as the Ulster custom. This custom, where it exists, the bill will convert into a law, to which the new courts will give effect. The second class of holdings are those which prevail under customs and usages other than that of Ulster; and these too are to be legalized, subject to the restriction that the tenant may claim the benefit of them only in cases where he is disturbed in his tenancy by the act of his landlord, if he has not been evicted for non-payment of rent, and has not sub-let or

sub-divided his holding without the landlord's consent. All arrears of rent and all damages done by the tenant to the farm may be pleaded by the landlord as a set-off, and the landlord may bar the pleading of any such custom, if he chooses to give his tenant a lease for not less than thirty-one years.

"Where the buildings are not connected with any custom there will be a scale of damages for evictions. In the case of holdings above fifty pounds a year, the parties may contract themselves out of the scale of damages, on the landlord giving a thirty-one years' lease, and undertaking to execute necessary improvements.

"In cases of eviction the following will be the scale of damages: If the holding is not valued in the public valuation over 10*l.* a year, the judge may award the holder a sum not exceeding seven years' rent; between 10*l.* and 50*l.* a year, a sum not exceeding five years' rent; between 50*l.* and 100*l.* a year, a sum not exceeding three years' rent; and above 100*l.* a year, not exceeding two years' rent.

"In addition to this, the question of permanent buildings and the reclamation of land will have to be dealt with.

"For the purpose of promoting improvements, advances of money will be authorised to landlords, to enable them to defray any charge raised against them in the way of improvement in the case of tenants retiring by an act of their own. The principle on which I propose to deal with improvements is, that they must have a rentable value and be suitable to the holdings, and the burden of proof will be laid on the landlords; and the measure will not be limited to future improvements, but will be extended to those already made. No claim will be allowed for any improvement made twenty years before the passing of the act, unless it is an improvement of the nature of a permanent building, or a reclamation of land; nor if the tenant holds under an existing lease or contract which forbids it; and in the case of past improvements the court may take into consideration the terms for which, and the terms on which, they have already been enjoyed by the tenant. No claim will be allowed in respect of improvements contrary to a future contract voluntarily entered into by the tenant, and which are not required for the due cultivation of the farm.

"As to lands under lease, a landlord may exempt his lands from being subject to any custom except the Ulster custom, provided that he agrees to give his tenant a lease for thirty-one years; but the lease must leave to the tenant at the close of that term a right to claim compensation under three heads—namely, tillages and manures, permanent buildings, and reclamation of lands.

"From the moment the bill is passed every Irishman will be absolutely responsible for every contract into which he enters. Non-payment of rent will be held as a bar to any claim on the landlord, reserving, however, discretion to the courts in certain cases. Notices to quit will have to be for twelve months instead of six, and date from the last day of the current year; and the notice must have a stamp duty of two shillings and sixpence.

"The bill also proposes to deal with the question of the county cess, which it will assimilate to the poor-rate. In every new tenancy it will have to be paid in moieties by landlord and tenant, as the poor-rate is now paid, and in every old tenancy under 4*l.* a year the occupier will be at once relieved."

Mr. Hardy, who in the absence of Mr. Disraeli acted as leader of the Conservative party, showed every disposition to receive the measure thus placed before the House in a fair and candid spirit. He promised that the party he represented would approach the consideration of the bill with the single object of making it just, practical, and conciliatory, and he readily agreed to the proposal made by Mr. Gladstone that the question of the second reading should be fixed for the 7th of March; on which day, accordingly, the debate on the second reading commenced, and was carried on without much animation till the 11th of that month. Mr. Disraeli, who had been prevented by illness from attending the House of Commons, appeared in his place, though evidently still suffering, and spoke ably, wittily, and moderately against the bill, which was read a second time without opposition.

But while the principle of the measure was favourably received, its details were jealously scrutinised. It was felt, that though the bill was intended to meet the peculiar circumstances of Ireland, it would scarcely be possible long to withhold from the English tenant the privileges and advantages bestowed on his Irish *confrère*. Accordingly three hundred notices of amendments were given. In order to gain time for their consideration, as well as that of the other numerous and important measures that were to be submitted by the government, it was agreed, at the suggestion of the prime minister, that morning sittings should be holden. The bill went through committee with only such alterations as the government accepted, and was read a first and second time in the House of Lords without opposition. Several amendments were made in committee, to which, with one exception, the government and the House of Commons agreed; and this important measure became law on the 1st of August.

The bill by which it was proposed to deal with the question of national education was introduced by Mr. Forster, only two days after the Irish Land Bill. The necessity for such a bill was great, and evident. After all that had been said and done in reference to this question, two-thirds of the juvenile population of the country were still without elementary education; and the question for the consideration of the government and legislature was, how this large residue should be brought under instruction. In order that this might be effected it was necessary not only to provide new schools, but also to overcome the reluctance and indifference of parents. The explanation given by Mr. Forster of the scheme by which the government proposed to meet these objects was briefly this :—

“It is our purpose to secure by enactment that there shall be efficient school provision in every district of England where it is wanted. The districts will be the civil parishes; and having divided England into districts, steps will then be taken to ascertain the educational provision and their wants. If we find that in any district the educational facilities afford a due amount of primary secular instruction, that district will be let alone as long as it continues to be supplied with educational facilities. With regard to schools which may be entitled to government aid, the first stipulation will be, that they should be efficient according to the standard which parliament from time to time may set up. In the second place it will be required that every school shall submit to an inspection without any denominational conditions. A conscience-clause will also be attached to every school as the condition of any grant. This condition will also apply to every kind of grant, whether for building or for any other purposes. These are the broad principles on which the bill is framed; and I trust they will secure not only the approval, but the support of parties opposite. They must recollect that this conscience-clause will apply to every kind of school, whether Church of England or of any other persuasion. I now come to what many will think the most important part of the bill—compulsory provision of schools. I do not believe that any central authority can undertake to supply schools all over England; and as voluntary local efforts have failed, we must supply what is wanted by local taxation under local management, to be supplemented by a government grant, but with central supervision and inspection. For this purpose there will be a power to unite parishes together; for the requirements of the town and country districts are so different that it is absolutely

necessary to have some power of the kind; but it is not contemplated to make the area of the school unions the same as that of the poor-law unions. Next with respect to the local board of management—who are to elect them? We have come to the conclusion that in towns the town council will be the best agency to elect school boards, and in the country the select vestries; but if there is no select vestry, then the vestry. We are not prepared to give up school fees; it will not be necessary nor advantageous. But there will be a power in exceedingly poor and destitute districts to set up free schools, subject to the approval of the central boards, and also to give free tickets, but with due care that they attach no social stigma. I know that the question of local rates is a very delicate matter; but I believe the money will be the best expended of all, and will eventually tend to decrease the other rates. The rate will not be a special one, but will be levied with the poor rate; and there will be a power in this bill, whenever this charge exceeds threepence in the pound, that it should be supplemented by a grant. The local boards will have a discretion either to establish fresh schools, or to assist the existing schools; but if they assist one, they must assist all, and not select any one for the bestowal of their favours. With respect to the knotty point of religious instruction, having inserted a most extensive clause, we will not interfere with the discretion of the local boards. The next question is the most difficult of all. It is, how to secure the attendance of children? The bill places before the House the principle of compulsion, the feeling in favour of which is, I believe, rapidly gaining ground; and it has already been established in the factory and short-time industrial schools. In them the plea of the value of the children's time is not admitted as valid to prevent them from being educated. The principle must be applied to all trades and manufactories alike, and will require a large army of inspectors to enforce it. To effect compulsory attendance, power will be given to school boards to frame by-laws to compel attendance between the hours of twelve and five, unless reasonable excuse can be alleged. These by-laws will be approved by central authority, and laid before parliament. The question of the number of attendances will be left for the local board to decide."

Seldom has an important government measure been received in a more candid and conciliatory spirit than was displayed towards the bill thus explained and introduced. Mr. Dixon, who at a later stage strongly opposed some of its provisions, expressed his gratitude to Mr. Forster for the measure, congratulated the govern-

ment on their sanction of it, expressed his conviction that the country generally would support them in their endeavours to carry out its provisions, and his belief that the promise given by the speech from the throne had been fully redeemed by its introduction. At the same time he intimated objections to some of its provisions—to the year of grace, to the discretion left to school boards with regard to religious teaching, to the absence of more stringent powers for enforcing attendance, to the retention of school fees, and to the want of a provision for the establishment of an educational department. Mr. Mundella hailed Mr. Forster's speech with unqualified satisfaction. Mr. Cowper Temple was gratified with the spirit in which the plan was introduced. Viscount Sandon was sure that both political parties in the constituency of Liverpool, which he represented, would cordially welcome Mr. Forster's speech. Sir J. Pakington, amidst the loud assenting cheers of the Conservative party, said that he had never listened to a speech with more heartfelt satisfaction. In a word, though the plan elicited one or two criticisms in the same tone as those of Mr. Dixon, they merely detracted from the general chorus of congratulation and commendation with which the measure was received at its first introduction. Meanwhile two societies had been formed representing the antagonistic views taken of the measure—the Education League and the Education Union, both striving by meetings and by other usual means of agitation to influence the public, the House of Commons, and the government, in favour of their respective views. These two bodies agreed that every child in the country should, as far as possible, be made to receive an elementary education—that state aid should be continued to existing schools, and that the conscientious religious scruples of parents should be respected. But the League proposed that schools hereafter to be erected should be supported by rates alone; the Union insisted that rates should be supplemented by subscriptions and children's pence. The former was in favour of direct compulsion as a means of enforcing attendance, the latter advocated indirect compulsion. The former insisted that there should be no denominational teaching in rate-supported schools, the latter recommended a general conscience clause.

Notwithstanding the favourable manner in which Mr. Dixon had spoken of the measure at its first introduction, he proposed an amendment to the second reading embodying the views of the League, but finding the feeling of the House to be strongly against him he attempted to withdraw it. The majority, however, insisted

on it being put and negatived, after which the bill was read a second time without a division.

The evident desire of the government to make it a national and not a party measure communicated itself to the majority of the members in all parts of the House, causing them to deal with it in the same spirit of candour and equity in which it had been introduced. But the chief struggle that arose was with regard to the religious teaching in the rate-supported schools. There were, in fact, four different parties representing four different opinions on this question. The first demanded that distinct dogmatic teaching should be allowed; the second contended for the reading of the Bible, with such comments and explanations as the teacher might think fit to give. The third insisted that no comment or explanation should be permitted; the fourth urged that the instruction should be exclusively secular. It must not, however, be supposed that the persons holding the last-mentioned view were all of them, or even most of them, hostile to religious teaching. Their contention was that the duty and responsibility of giving that instruction, or seeing that it was given, belonged to the parents, and it was desirable that they should be made to feel that this was the case, and not look to others for that teaching which it was their own peculiar province and duty to impart or superintend.

Government remained silent, desiring, as Mr. Gladstone explained, "to reserve to themselves the advantages of consideration for as long a time as possible, because every day multiplied the expression of opinion and feeling in the country." At length, on the 16th of June, Mr. Gladstone announced that they had determined to adopt a motion of which Mr. Cowper Temple had given notice, excluding all catechisms and distinctive dogmatic formularies from schools founded by rates, and to place voluntary schools under the Committee of Council, making a maximum increase of 50 per cent. in the grants to them. On the other hand, after a certain time, to be fixed in the bill, no more grants were to be made towards the erection of new schools. On the motion of Mr. Disraeli the discussion of the measure thus amended was deferred till June 20th. The first division took place on the question of going into committee, which was carried by 421 to 60. The bill was in committee from the 24th June till the 27th July, when the report was brought up, and it received its last amendments. Many important improvements had been made in its machinery. The compromise adopted by ministers was main-

tained. The denominational system was continued but not extended. Religious inspection was withdrawn; but religious instruction was permitted, under certain regulations, on the understanding that the State was not in future to aid in paying for it; and that it was not in any case to be forced on the child of an objecting parent.

This compromise was far from satisfying Messrs. Dixon and Miall, who expressed their disappointment when the question of the third reading was brought forward on the 22nd of July. The latter gentleman especially spoke in a very acrimonious tone, complaining that he and his friends had been "led through the valley of humiliation," and quoting the proverb "once bit, twice shy." His complaints called up Mr. Gladstone, who thus replied: "If my honourable friend has been bitten, by whom is it? If he has been bitten, it is only in consequence of expectations which he has himself chosen to entertain—expectations not justified by the facts. We have been thankful to have the independent and honourable support of my honourable friend, but that support ceases to be of value when accompanied by reproaches such as these. I hope my honourable friend will not continue that support to the government one moment longer than he deems it consistent with his sense of duty and right. For God's sake, sir, let him withdraw at the moment he thinks it better for the cause that he has at heart that he should do so. So long as my honourable friend thinks fit to give us his support we will co-operate with him for every purpose that we have in common; but when we think his opinions and demands exacting, when we think that he looks too much to the section of the community which he adorns, and too little to the interests of the people at large, we must then recollect that we, who have assumed the heavy responsibility of the government of this great country, must endeavour to forget the parts in the whole, and propose to ourselves no narrower object than the welfare of the empire at large."

The bill was received by the Peers with a remarkable unanimity of approbation, and went through the House of Lords without any important alteration.

We are not yet sufficiently distant from the period of the passing of this great measure to be able to predict its future working with full confidence; but there can be no doubt that it is the greatest educational step in advance that has yet been taken; and though a measure of so difficult and complicated a nature will probably require many amendments, the nature of which must be determined

by experience, yet it so far settles the question as to leave no room for any other measure on the subject of anything like equal magnitude and importance.

A parliamentary paper obtained by Mr. Ripley shows how much the Education Act has already effected. In 1870 the number of elementary (not being board) schools was 8,281; in 1871 the number had increased to 8,798; in 1872 to 9,772; in 1873 to 10,574; and in 1874 to 11,408. In 1870 there was accommodation for 1,878,584 children; in 1874 there was accommodation for 2,626,318. The average attendance in 1870 was 1,152,389, and in 1874 it was 1,540,466. The school fees in 1870 amounted to 502,022*l.*; and in 1874 they amounted to 762,184*l.* The amount of voluntary subscriptions was 418,839*l.* in 1870, and 601,172*l.* in 1874. The government grant in 1870 amounted to 562,611*l.*, and in 1874 to 956,347*l.*

In connection with this great measure for the reform of the elementary education of the country we will briefly refer to two other highly important measures of educational reform—the Endowed Schools Bill and the University Tests Bill, the former of which passed in 1869 and the latter in 1871.

The former of these measures was intended to raise the character and remedy the abuses of the endowed schools of the country, which were very far from being efficient according to their number, their revenues, or the intentions of those by whom they were founded. The condition of these schools had been carefully investigated by two commissions appointed to inquire into the middle class or secondary education of the country, with a view to its improvement. The first, which was presided over by the Duke of Newcastle, dealt with the question of elementary education; the other inquired into the condition of certain public schools, such as Eton, Harrow, etc. A third commission was appointed to inquire into the condition of the very large number of schools which had not been investigated by the two previous commissions; that is to say, into the middle class and secondary schools of the country; and it was on the report of this last-mentioned commission that Mr. Forster's Endowed Schools Bill was based. This measure proposed, in the first place, to confirm and sanction an arrangement which cannot be better stated than in the following words of Sir R. Palmer: "I think it now well settled that in all cases where the court (of Chancery) settles a scheme—it being a Church school—it says religion shall be taught according to the principles of the Established Church, but that no children whose parents, or persons

standing in the place of parents, object, shall be compelled to learn any formularies or to attend the public worship of the Church of England."

The next question which the bill dealt with related to the means by which the efficiency of the schools was to be tested. The government did not see its way to the establishment of a system of inspection over these schools, because it was agreed on almost all hands that inspection should be based on the principle of payment for results, and in this case it was not the government that paid but the parents of the children. However, they proposed to establish a board which should provide for the examination of the scholars of endowed schools at least once a year. To remedy the incompetency of the masters, which had been abundantly proved by evidence given before the commissioners, the government took authority by the bill to establish a board with powers of granting certificates of competence to masters. This body was to be composed of twelve members, six of whom were to be chosen by Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, and London, and six by government; and it was hoped that it would not only grant certificates, but act as a sort of standing council to the government in educational matters, and help to raise the character of masters generally, not only in public and endowed but also in private and proprietary schools. The bill was read a second time without a division, and then referred to a select committee in which all parties were fairly represented, and went through the House of Commons without difficulty. In the House of Lords it was deprived of much of its efficiency; nevertheless, a commission was appointed under it, through whose action a very large number of schools have been greatly improved as places of education; and there can be little doubt that the principles on which the bill was based will in the end be adopted in dealing with the numerous and important institutions to which it applies. The Universities of Oxford and Cambridge have already taken the initiative in appointing a board of examiners and giving certificates to masters of schools.

The question which the University Tests Bill was intended to settle was one which had from time to time occupied the attention and excited the strong interest of the legislature. As early as 1834, in the second session of the first reformed parliament, Mr. G. W. Wood, member for North Lancashire, moved for leave to bring in a bill for the admission of dissenters to the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. Lord J. Russell spoke warmly in favour of the motion, which was supported by a large majority of the House of

Commons. The attempt thus made was renewed by Mr. W. D. Christie, member for Weymouth, in 1843, and was again supported by Lord J. Russell, but was opposed by Sir R. Peel, then prime minister with a Conservative majority, and defeated. In 1848 the attention of the legislature and the country was again drawn to the subject in consequence of the presentation of a very able memorial praying for the appointment of a royal commission of inquiry, drawn up by the Rev. Mr. Stanley (now Dr. Stanley and Dean of Westminster), and signed by some of the most eminent members of the two institutions whose usefulness the memorialists desired to extend. This memorial was followed up in 1850 by a motion made by Mr. James Heywood, member for North Lancashire, for an inquiry, having for its object the reform of the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, and Dublin. Mr. Heywood had himself been educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, but being a Unitarian had not been able to take any degree. He had devoted considerable time, labour, and expense to the examination of the statutes and constitution of the university. He had ascertained how greatly its funds were wasted and misapplied. The question thus raised excited a strong feeling on both sides, which was manifested by the aspect of the House when it was expected to be brought forward. The benches on both sides were crowded. The six university members occupied the seats usually reserved for the leaders of the opposition, thus showing their determination to offer on behalf of the venerable seats of learning which they represented an uncompromising resistance to the proposed change. Behind them were ranged a large number of members who had been educated at one or other of the universities, and who, regarding the attempt to interfere with them as almost a profanation, were prepared to do battle for them.

A very earnest and noisy discussion was evidently impending, when Lord J. Russell rose and stated that, if Mr. Heywood would consent to withdraw his motion, the government would advise the crown to issue a royal commission, which, without dealing specially with the grievances of dissenters, would inquire into the state of the universities. Mr. Heywood, seeing that this would be the best means of promoting his object, readily assented, and on the 18th of July, Lord J. Russell gave the following explanation of the intentions of the government: "We propose to make such inquiries as were made with respect to the municipal corporations and the ecclesiastical bodies; and if it should, on inquiry, be thought necessary that any alteration should be made, it

will afterwards be time to inquire what is the authority by which these alterations should be effected."

The commissioners who were appointed in accordance with this pledge encountered great difficulties, because they were not empowered to compel the attendance of witnesses, and consequently many of the university authorities, among whom was the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford, refused to give evidence. The report they made was published in 1852, during the administration of Lord Derby, who, contented himself with distributing copies of it to those whom it chiefly concerned. But in 1854, Lord Aberdeen being then in office, a bill for the reform of the University of Oxford, based on the recommendations of the commissioners, was brought in by government, and a memorial signed by 100 members of the House of Commons was presented to Lord J. Russell, requesting the introduction of clauses abolishing religious tests at matriculation and graduation in that university. Lord J. Russell, as a member of the government, felt himself unable to accede to a request, which, as an independent member, he would, no doubt, have warmly supported. Mr Heywood therefore proposed clauses to that effect, which were carried by large majorities in the Commons and in the Upper House, but with the addition of a rider, proposed by Lord Derby, which provided that such degrees should not qualify those on whom they were conferred to hold university offices which had hitherto been held exclusively by members of the Church of England. Hitherto nonconformists had been allowed to pass through Cambridge, and to undergo the examination for the B.A. degree without any test being presented to them. At Oxford, on the contrary, they were stopped at the very threshold of their university career by a test required at matriculation. The university reformers therefore began at Oxford, and by the act passed in 1851 they succeeded in abolishing not only the test at matriculation but also the test at graduation, so that students at Oxford could now take the B.A. degree; and Oxford, which had been behind Cambridge, was now in advance of her. But in 1856 a bill for the further reform of the University of Cambridge was carried, which enabled nonconformists in that University to proceed to the degree of M.A. In 1863, 1864, and 1865 attempts were made to open the universities still further, by placing Oxford on the same footing as Cambridge with regard to the admission of dissenters to the M.A. degree, and for removing the obstacles which prevented nonconformists from becoming fellows of colleges. The last of these measures had been introduced by Mr.

Goschen, and the second reading was carried by a majority of sixteen, but the bill was dropped. Mr. Coleridge next took up the question, introducing a bill differing in words but agreeing in substance with Mr. Goschen's, which was read a second time by a considerable majority, but proceeded no further. In 1867 the bill was again brought forward, passed the House of Commons, but was rejected by the Lords. In 1868 a bill, brought forward by Mr. Bouverie in previous sessions, was amalgamated with it, but the dissolution of parliament cut short the progress of the measure. In 1869 Mr. Coleridge, now become Sir J. D. Coleridge and solicitor-general, again introduced the bill in his private capacity, and again carried it through the House of Commons, only to see it once more rejected by the Peers. In 1871 he brought the same bill forward as a government measure. As the bill of the preceding year had been rather deferred than rejected by the Peers, the measure now introduced was, with the exception of a mere verbal alteration, an exact reprint of the bill of the last year, and therefore the solicitor-general in re-introducing it and proposing the second reading was spared the necessity of entering into a detailed explanation of its nature and contents. He stated that the bill dealt with two great subjects, the universities and the colleges. In dealing with the former it compelled that amount of religious freedom in regard to all the subjects of the Queen which the House of Commons had on previous occasions, by overwhelming majorities, declared to be just and right. In dealing with the colleges it only removed all restrictions upon their freedom of action which had been imposed from time to time by the authority of the legislature. It left them controlled by their statutes, by the feeling of their members, and by all the associations that had gathered round them. Sir J. Coleridge mentioned several instances of persons of the highest merit who had been excluded from the distinctions to which they were fairly entitled by restrictions imposed not by the colleges or their founders, but by the legislature. The senior wrangler of that very year, being a Jew, had been excluded from the just result of his academical success. The bill simply proposed to allow the colleges, if they thought fit, to alter this state of things. An attempt was made in committee by Mr. Stevenson to open degrees in divinity to dissenters, and by Mr. Fawcett to open clerical fellowships to laymen; but both these amendments were rejected. In the House of Lords the Marquis of Salisbury proposed to substitute for subscription to the thirty-nine articles a new test binding those who held certain offices in

colleges, "now subsisting" in the two universities, not to teach anything contrary to the Divine authority of the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. This amendment, though opposed by many Conservative peers, and by most of the bishops, was carried by a majority of five; but, being rejected by the Commons, was not insisted on by the Lords, and so the bill passed in its original shape.

While the Education Bill was passing through its last stages, events of the highest importance were occurring on the continent. Never, perhaps, had the state of affairs appeared more tranquil or assuring than at the commencement of July, 1870. The English foreign minister, Lord Granville, and the French prime minister, M. Olivier, had both publicly testified that not a cloud rested on the political horizon. This profound political calm was disturbed by the intelligence that the Prince of Hohenzollern had been put forward as a candidate for the vacant Spanish throne, with every prospect of being elected. At another time, and under other circumstances, such an announcement would not have excited any very strong feeling, but the grasping and aggressive policy of King William of Prussia and his minister Bismarck, caused the event to be regarded throughout France with a degree of alarm more than commensurate with the circumstances that gave rise to it. "What," it was asked, "what are our ambassadors doing at Madrid and Berlin? How is it that this intrigue has escaped their vigilance? Prussia is penetrating everywhere. She is carrying on her intrigues in Germany, Roumania, Italy, and now she is trying to penetrate into Spain. What next?" The Duc de Gramont, the minister of foreign affairs, interrogated on the subject, replied to his questioners in terms which indicated that if the candidature of Prince Hohenzollern were pressed, war would be declared against Prussia, but on the following Wednesday he announced the withdrawal of the candidature, adding, however, that the negotiations that had been set on foot to obtain that withdrawal were not yet wholly terminated. A general feeling prevailed that the affair was at an end. But on the following day despatches from Ems announced that the Prussian king had refused to see M. Benedetti, the French ambassador, who was directed by his government to require the King of Prussia, who, as head of the family of Hohenzollern, had sanctioned the prince's candidature, not only to withdraw that sanction, but to promise not to renew it at any future time. The English government, regarding this demand as unreasonable, laboured to bring

the parties to an agreement. But, unfortunately, behind the two governments were two high-spirited nations, whose passions were strongly excited, and the good offices of the English government were employed to no purpose. The general feeling in England at the outbreak of the war was one of sympathy with Prussia, which was generally supposed to have been forced into a war by the French government. This feeling was not a little strengthened by the publication in the *Times* of the draft of a treaty written by M. Benedetti in 1866, in which it was proposed, on certain conditions and under certain eventualities, that Belgium should be annexed to France, and that Prussia was to support the annexation with all her force, she being allowed to indemnify herself by annexations which France, in her turn, bound herself to support. As the independence of Belgium was guaranteed by the English government, the publication of this document excited a strong feeling of indignation, which, however, was allayed by the explanation that Benedetti had been the dupe of Bismarck, who, when Hanover and other German states were being annexed to the Prussian dominions, held out this bait to France, among several others of a similar character. M. Benedetti stated that he had written the draft of the treaty from the dictation of the astute Prussian minister, who took it for the alleged purpose of showing it to King William, while Benedetti forwarded an account of the negotiation to the French Emperor, by whom it was unhesitatingly rejected.

It does not fall within the province of this history to relate how the German forces overwhelmed MacMahon at Worth, overthrew the empire at Sedan, beleaguered and finally captured Bazaine and his army at Metz, surrounded the French capital with a living wall, which no force and no efforts made from within could break through; nor how the communistic mob of Paris overthrew the empire, and after having created a new form of government embarrassed the defenders of their city from within, more seriously than their German assailants injured them from without.

While these events were being transacted the sympathies of the English people were veering round to the side of that ally which had stood by us so faithfully in the Crimean war, and which had been drawn so much closer to us by the treaty which Mr. Cobden had negotiated. The English people, too, had not forgotten how Schleswig Holstein had been torn from Denmark, how Hanover and other German states had been annexed to Prussia, and, though favourable to German unity, were by no

means anxious to see a Prussianized Germany strengthened and augmented by a large portion of territory taken from conquered France. They had, indeed, no desire to take part in the struggle, but when they saw that the emperor whom the Prussian monarch had declared to be the only person against whom he waged war was a prisoner in his hands, and France, bleeding at every pore, lying at his mercy, they felt that the punishment inflicted was sufficiently severe, and earnestly desired that the war might be closed by a treaty which would not be too humiliating for France. But with this feeling was mingled an apprehension that, if through any violation of the treaty engagements into which we had entered with the nations of the Continent, we should be drawn into a continental war, our soldiers might not improbably be found even less able to cope with the disciplined legions of Germany than the French troops had proved; and, therefore, while there was a strong feeling in favour of withdrawing, as far as we honourably could, from all continental complications, there was also a feeling in favour of such a measure of military reform as would make our soldiers fully equal in quality to the soldiers of any other nation.

The government had at a very early period of the struggle endeavoured to allay the alarm of the country. On the 21st of July Mr. Gladstone announced that both of the belligerent powers had given satisfactory assurances of their desire to respect the neutrality of Belgium, Holland, and Luxemburg; and on the same evening, in answer to some remarks made by Mr. Disraeli, he explained that the position assumed by the government of this country towards the two belligerents was one of strict neutrality—not an *armed* neutrality, but a *secure* neutrality, backed and sustained by adequate measures of defence. He added that, happily for this country, we had forces established which were not only of the highest efficiency but were capable of easy and rapid extension, and that the reductions that had been made had rather increased than diminished our strength, that we had still an army of 89,000, and a reserve of 41,000, while in 1868 we had 87,000 regular troops and 19,000 reserve force. In the navy we had a strong system of concentrated defence that was in every way superior to the old system.

These explanations were satisfactory so far as the numbers and organization of our naval and military forces were concerned, but they left untouched the question of their quality, respecting which, as the French troops were borne down by the advancing

Germans, more and more anxiety was felt in this country, especially when it transpired that our government had entered into a treaty with the governments of France and Prussia, by which England was bound, in case of any violation of the Belgian territory by either of the belligerents, to co-operate with the other power in defence of that neutrality, without taking any other part in the war. This treaty, however, was only to continue in force for one year after the conclusion of the war. It will be easily understood that a treaty which bound the English government to interfere, even to this limited extent, would be strongly disapproved by Mr. Bright, and as he was incapacitated by illness from taking any part in public affairs, and even from reading or writing a letter, he caused his resignation to be at once placed in the hands of Mr. Gladstone, who forwarded to him some explanations of the nature and objects of the treaty calculated to remove his objections, and begged him to defer his resignation, which would at that moment have greatly embarrassed the government. Mr. Bright accordingly left the resignation in Mr. Gladstone's hands, to be made use of when he thought fit, but with a request that it might be laid before the Queen at the earliest period that the premier might think desirable.

Russia took advantage of the helpless condition of France, in order to reopen the Black Sea question. The Treaty of 1856 had left her in a very humiliating position. While other European nations were at liberty to have as many vessels as they pleased in the waters that washed her southern coasts, Russia was bound by that treaty to have no more than six small ships of war. Accordingly, towards the end of October, 1871, Prince Gortschakoff issued a circular addressed to the various diplomatic agents of the Russian government, repudiating, in the name of the Emperor, some of the most important stipulations of the treaty. This high-handed proceeding of the Russian government met with more opposition than had been anticipated. Lord Granville protested on behalf of England, and his representations were supported not only by the Austrian and Italian governments, but by Prussia, now in the full tide of military success. She therefore agreed to submit her claim to a conference of the representatives of the Great Powers of Europe, to be held in London. The conference waited for some time in order to give M. Jules Favre, the French minister of foreign affairs, then shut up in Paris, an opportunity of attending it; but, after wasting much time in fruitless negotiations with the Prussian government respecting

a safe conduct for him, it proceeded with its deliberations on the 26th of January, 1871, without a representative of the French nation. The conference agreed to abrogate the neutralization of the Black Sea, stipulated for by the Treaty of 1856, but the Porte was allowed to open the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus to the ships of friendly and allied powers whenever their presence appeared to be necessary for the maintenance of the treaty. Thus this threatening war-cloud passed quietly away. The alarm it caused helped to draw public attention to the condition of our army, and especially to the purchase system. A cry for its abolition had been raised during the Crimean war, but had sunk again into silence during the peace that followed. It was again raised in consequence of the events we have just narrated, and an agitation, headed by Mr G. O. Trevelyan, member for the Ilawick boroughs, encouraged the government at once to take in hand this much-needed reform. Accordingly, when the session of 1871 was opened on the 9th of February, the first measure recommended to the attention of the legislature in the queen's speech was a bill for the "better regulation of the army and the land forces of the crown."

But before any bill could be brought forward, the negotiations which had been carried on during the recess engaged the attention of the legislature, and were subjected to severe criticism. The attitude of the government in reference to the original dispute between France and Prussia was strongly censured, and it was contended that by expressing, in the first instance, a more decided disapproval of the French demands it might have prevented war. The course adopted by the government with regard to the Russian demands was still more strongly condemned. Sir Robert Peel particularly distinguished himself by the severity of his strictures. He dwelt, amidst loud laughter, on the frequency with which the word "venture" occurred in the foreign correspondence of the government, and contrasted the deferential language of the present foreign minister with the spirited tone which pervaded Lord Palmerston's diplomatic correspondence. These debates indicated the public feeling with regard to the questions of which they treated, which was cleverly stimulated by an anonymous pamphlet, entitled "The Battle of Dorking," in which a veteran who had escaped from the destruction of the British army by the Germans in this imaginary conflict, describes to his grand-children in the year 1921 the preceding glory and greatness of England. Never perhaps were alarms more groundless. France, conquered, humiliated, bound hand and foot, bleeding at every pore, loaded

with a war indemnity such as no nation had ever borne before, and burning with a frantic desire to avenge her defeat, and recover the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine, which the conquering Prussians had torn from her, was little likely to dream of attacking us. Germany, Italy, and Russia, now that the Black Sea question was settled, were all animated by the most pacific sentiments, and were neither singly nor collectively able to cope with our navy. The "balance of power," the cause or pretext of so many bloody wars, had been tumbled in the dust. Nevertheless, the necessity of adopting a spirited policy, holding "dignified language," maintaining a firm attitude, had gained such a hold on the public mind that even a ministry as strong as Mr. Gladstone's could not withstand the prevalent excitement, and they were not sorry to avail themselves of it in order to effect the abolition of a system which enabled the longest purse to carry it over the most brilliant military genius. It seems strange and paradoxical to affirm that there could be much difficulty in abolishing an abuse which every man out of the army and every man in the army not interested in the maintenance of it, condemned. But the reader of this work will have had frequent occasion to remark that a small knot of interested persons, well organized and banded together, will often hold their ground against the calm and dispassionate opinion of the great body of the nation. In this case the purchase system was defended as every time-honoured absurdity before it was defended. High authorities were quoted, the efficiency of the service was alleged to depend on its continuance, and it was predicted that its abolition would be the sunset of the glory of the British army.

Mr. Cardwell brought forward his plan with commendable promptitude on the 16th of February. His bill provided not only for the substitution of promotion by merit for promotion by purchase, but also for a thorough reorganization of the army by a combination of the regular troops, the militia, the reserves, and the volunteers. The introduction of this bill, involving, as it did, the increase of the army estimates by several millions, caused them to be discussed with unusual interest, excitement, and frequency, and afforded the opponents of the measure an opportunity for delay, of which they availed themselves to the uttermost. It soon became evident that if the bill was to be carried during the session, the government would be obliged to sacrifice their scheme of reorganization, and content themselves with effecting the abolition of purchase. Even then Mr. Cardwell was obliged to remind the military obstructives that the over-regulation prices were illegal.

This hint had the desired effect, and the bill was eventually carried in the Commons by 289 votes to 231. At a meeting of peers held at the Carlton Club, it was decided that the bill should be opposed in the House of Lords. Accordingly, the Duke of Richmond, the leader of the Conservative peers, moved a resolution to the effect, that the House desired to see the whole of the government plan before dealing with the question of the abolition of purchase. His motion was one for passing the bill after further delay, but the speech in which he proposed it was an argument against the principle of the bill. The information he sought had been given as far as possible, not only in the debates of the House of Commons, but in the speech of Lord Northbrook, who proposed the second reading in the House of Lords, and stated with great clearness the scope and object of the bill, which was the abolition of purchase as a first step towards a searching and efficient army reform. Nevertheless, the Duke of Richmond's amendment was carried by a majority of 25, and it was generally supposed that the bill was lost for the session. It was true that the second reading had not been rejected, but it had been subjected to a condition with which it was impossible to comply. The opponents of the bill were loudly jubilant, but their triumph was of short duration. Two days after, both Houses were crowded in expectation of an announcement of the course which the government would take in consequence of the adoption of the Duke of Richmond's amendment. Greatly to the delight of the supporters of the government it was pointed out by Lord Granville in the Upper House, and Mr. Gladstone in the Lower, that the success of the Duke of Richmond's amendment did not necessitate the loss of the bill, but only the postponement of the second reading, which might still be moved by any peer; and they announced that as purchase was legalized not by statute but by royal warrant, and as the over-regulation prices then paid could only be got rid of by abolishing them altogether, the government had advised the Queen to cancel the warrant by which purchase was authorized, the consequence of which would be the abolition of purchase on the first of November. It was added that the government would use their best efforts to secure just and liberal terms for the officers affected by the step now taken.

Seldom has the House of Commons rung with a more triumphant cheer than this announcement elicited. It placed the majority of the House of Lords in a very embarrassing dilemma. The chief object of the bill was gained. Purchase, which owed its existence to one exercise of the royal prerogative, was abolished by another.

The Army Regulation Bill thus became chiefly a measure for compensating officers for the losses they would sustain through the abolition of purchase. The Lords therefore censured ministers by a majority of eighty, and passed the bill. If nothing more than this had been effected during the session, the government would richly have deserved the gratitude of the nation. It had stormed a stronghold of class interest, which, if not attacked by a powerful government, might have continued for many years to impair the efficiency and prevent the reorganization of our army. But this was by no means the only measure of great public interest and importance carried during the session of 1871. As we have already seen, the University Tests Bill was passed this year. So too were the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, abolishing the intolerant provisions that had been incorporated in the measure which the "Papal Aggression" provoked; the Trades Union Bill, carrying out the recommendations of the commissioners appointed to inquire into that important question, and seeking to put an end to trade disputes by the introduction of a system of impartial justice both towards employers and those employed by them; and the Local Government Bill, extending to small towns and villages the administrative advantages enjoyed by cities and boroughs.

The history of the budget of this year is too remarkable to be passed unnoticed.

There was an excess of expenditure above revenue, amounting to £2,713,000. To meet this deficiency Mr. Lowe proposed to make certain alterations in the probate, legacy, and succession duties; to lay a tax on lucifer matches, and add a penny to the income tax, which was to be imposed for the future by a percentage. This budget encountered perhaps greater opposition than any which had preceded it. The long-suffering income-tax payers would probably have continued to grumble and pay as they had hitherto done under every vicissitude through which the impost had passed. But the mystification and puzzling which it was alleged would be caused by the "percentage" and the "death duties," as they were termed, excited energetic opposition. But of all Mr. Lowe's proposals that which elicited the strongest resistance was the tax on lucifer matches. No sooner was the intention of the government known than a very effective opposition was organized. From the lowest parts of London thousands of poor girls, said to be earning a miserable subsistence by means of some industry connected with the production of these articles, filled the passages leading to the House of Commons, and besought the members to reject the pro-

*posed impost: Their evident poverty pleaded powerfully in their favour. Their appeal was favourably received, and the general sentiment of the House was strongly expressed in favour of it. The match tax and the succession duties were abandoned, and a penny added to the income tax filled up the gap in the budget which their withdrawal had caused.

The establishment of a republic in France, after the downfall of the empire, encouraged the hopes and stimulated the exertion of the republicans of this country. Public meetings were held, and republican clubs founded in London, Birmingham, Newcastle, Nottingham, and several other large towns.

This agitation was at its height when an event occurred which showed how little it had effected the deep-rooted attachment of the English people to their monarchical institutions and to the person and family of the sovereign. Never perhaps in any country did any announcement evoke a stronger and more general expression of sympathy and sorrow than the news that the Prince of Wales was suffering from an attack of the disorder which had proved fatal to his illustrious father. He had been spending a few days at the seat of Lord Londesborough, near Scarborough, and it was supposed that during his stay he had been exposed to an effluvia proceeding from a badly trapped drain. This report was promptly contradicted by Lord Londesborough's medical attendant, who stated that the sanitary arrangements of the mansion had been carefully examined in anticipation of the Prince's visit, and had been found to be in the best order. It is, however, certain that several inmates of the house had been attacked by typhoid symptoms more or less severe, and that one of them, the Earl of Chesterfield, had sunk under the attack. The Prince himself, after his return to Sandringham, exhibited similar symptoms, which assumed a serious character. Before this time unfavourable rumours respecting his moral character had been industriously circulated, had obtained too-ready credence in some quarters, and had somewhat impaired his popularity. But when it became known that he was suffering under serious and alarming illness there was an unparalleled outburst of popular sympathy. It seemed as though the whole nation had become one great family whose hope and chief stay was hanging between life and death. In every town, in every village, each successive bulletin was expected with intense anxiety, and as the telegraph flashed tidings of the Prince's condition to the furthest extremities of the earth, Englishmen were there anxiously expecting the latest intelligence, and going away

joyful or dejected according as the tidings were hopeful or unfavourable. The sympathy and anxiety culminated on the 14th December, the anniversary of the death of the Prince Consort, and when it was found that on that day there had been a change for the better the nation breathed more freely and hoped more sanguinely. Meanwhile, in almost every place of worship throughout the British Empire prayers were offered for the Prince's recovery. On the 18th of December he was so far restored to health that the Queen and the other members of the royal family felt themselves at liberty to quit Sandringham, and from that time, in spite of the appearance of some untoward symptoms, the progress of the Prince's recovery, though slow, was steady and unbroken. On the 26th the Queen wrote a letter, in which she warmly expressed her deep sense of the touching sympathy shown by her people during those painful and terrible days both for herself and the Princess of Wales, as well as of the general joy at the improvement in the Prince of Wales's state, which, she wrote, "have made a deep and lasting impression on her heart which can never be effaced." Having thus conveyed her thanks to her subjects the Queen determined to make a public demonstration of her gratitude to the Almighty for his mercies lately shown to herself and to the Prince. A solemn thanksgiving service was held at St. Paul's, and was attended by the Queen, the Prince, and the rest of the royal family. They were received with a sympathy and enthusiasm which drew from the Queen the acknowledgement:—

"The remembrance of this day, and of the remarkable order maintained throughout, will for ever be affectionately remembered by the Queen and her family."

The questions which chiefly engaged the attention of the legislature during the session of 1872 were those of secret voting and the licensing of public-houses.

Perhaps no question had so long or so frequently been brought under the attention of the Lower House as that of vote by ballot; none had been more eagerly pressed or more strenuously resisted. Addison, in a letter dated Feb. 2, 1708, mentions that the House of Commons was then engaged in a project for deciding elections by "balloting," but nothing more seems to have been heard of it until after the peace of 1815. It then attracted so much popular support that Lord J. Russell, in bringing forward the Reform Bill in 1831, thought it necessary to apologize for the absence from the measure of any provision regarding the ballot, on the ground that it was desirable that the question of secret voting should be dealt with separately. During the first session of the

reformed parliament in 1833, the question was embodied in a bill brought forward by Mr. Grote, the historian of Greece, then one of the members for the city of London, and it formed the subject of a long series of motions, introduced first by that gentleman, and after his retirement from parliament by Mr. Berkeley. It was also one of the points of the "People's Charter," and perhaps the one to which, of all others, the Chartists attached the greatest importance. It was strongly advocated by a large majority of the Liberal party throughout the country. Lord J. Russell always opposed it, but when provoked by the intimidation and corruption practised at the elections of members of parliament, he used language which caused some to hope and others to fear that he would become a convert. Sidney Smith, in one of the ablest, wittiest, and most ingenious of his writings, had argued strongly against its adoption. The question, however, was slowly and steadily making its way. The evidence taken by a committee appointed in 1868 to consider the subject, converted many, and amongst the rest Mr. Gladstone, who had previously opposed it; and it was decided that the subject should be dealt with by the government. Accordingly, in 1871 it was intimated in the queen's speech that the question would be brought forward, and a measure was introduced by Mr. Forster, which, after having passed the Commons, was rejected by the Lords on the ground that it was submitted to them at a period of the session too late to admit of its being duly considered. This year it was again passed by the Lower House and sent up to the Peers, by whom it was read a second time, but an amendment was carried in committee which made secret voting optional. It was rejected by the Commons, and not being insisted on by the Lords, the bill was adopted nearly in the form in which it had been originally proposed, establishing the system of secret voting with which we are all familiar, abolishing the public nomination of candidates and declaration of the poll, formalities which were fruitful causes of riot and disorder. A clause introduced in the Upper House provided that the bill should only remain in force to the close of the year 1880, but there can be no doubt that, after the very satisfactory experience we have had of its working, all parties will agree to continue the system it has introduced.

The amendment of the licensing laws was introduced by Mr. Bruce, the home secretary. The agitation carried on by the United Kingdom Alliance for "the total and immediate suppression of the liquor traffic" had indeed failed to attain the object at which it aimed, but had effected a great change in public opinion with

regard to the use and utility of alcoholic liquors. It had also drawn general attention to the enormous amount of crime, pauperism, and misery they produced, and the prodigious expenditure they occasioned in police, prisons, workhouses, &c. The Alliance had collected and diffused throughout the land an immense amount of evidence, and had obtained the enormous sum of 100 000*l.*, which it employed in carrying on the agitation. The publicans, who in the first instance had treated its efforts with derision, had now become seriously alarmed and presented a strong and united front. Thus Mr. Bruce was placed between two powerful and highly excited parties. The publicans professed to desire the adoption of measures calculated to get rid of drunkenness; the Alliance wanted to get rid of the drink. The publicans pleaded for the interests of their trade; the Alliance contended that they should yield to the welfare of the people. The publicans sued for compensation; the Alliance demanded retribution. It was impossible to devise any compromise that would be accepted by two parties so diametrically opposed. It was foreseen from the first that the government would lose much popularity by pressing the question; but it was felt that it was one that could only be dealt with by a strong government, and that the present administration was bound to employ the power which the last general election had given them in dealing vigorously with a question so important to the public morality. Mr. Disraeli's administration had framed a measure on the subject, which their defeat at the last general election prevented them from bringing forward. Mr. Bruce introduced a bill in 1871, but, as there was not time to carry it during that session, a temporary measure was passed giving to the home secretary a veto on all licences granted by the magistrates; and in 1872 the bill of 1871 was revived. Mr. Bruce's bill did not go the length of the Permissive Bill, and did not even admit the principle which it embodied of giving the public some control over the public-houses. At the same time, being fully aware of the evils that attended the liquor traffic and of the necessity of putting very strong restraints on it, while he left to the magistracy the power of granting or withdrawing licences under certain regulations, and protected publicans from vexatious appeals, he provided that a register should be kept of offences committed in public-houses, increased the penalties inflicted for drunkenness, provided securities against the adulteration of intoxicating liquors, and shortened the hours during which public-houses were permitted to remain open both on Sundays and week-days.

The bill was carried through the two Houses. The enforcement of its early-closing provisions led at first to some slight disturbances, chiefly directed against hotels for the entertainment of travellers, which necessarily remained open after the other public-houses had been closed; but these disorders were confined to one or two localities, and were easily suppressed. The new licence law was enforced without difficulty, but gave bitter offence to the publicans, whose resentment was manifested at the elections which took place after the passing of the measure in a manner very disastrous to the government by which it had been framed and carried.

The treaty of Washington and the proceedings that arose out of it constitute an important era in the history of the world. We have already alluded to the ill-feeling produced in America by the ravages which the *Alabama* and other ships that had gone out from our ports had committed. That feeling became so strong that the United States government, which from its constitution is peculiarly liable to be acted on by every impulse of popular feeling, could not disregard it, and sensible men on both sides of the Atlantic desired to see something done to allay the prevalent ill-feeling. To the Earl of Derby belongs the credit of having proposed to submit the questions at issue between the two countries to a tribunal of arbitration. He was met in a most cordial spirit by Mr. Reverdy Johnson, who had been sent to this country as the representative of the United States, and a negotiation was set on foot which ended in the embodiment of their ideas in a treaty. Unfortunately, Mr. Johnson accepted a great number of invitations to banquets in different parts of the country, and used language at them which, though intended only to express gratitude for the cordiality of his reception and good-will towards England, gave great umbrage to his countrymen and led to his recall. The treaty he was engaged in negotiating shared the unpopularity of the negotiator, and was rejected in the Senate of the United States by an almost unanimous vote. Mr. Johnson was succeeded by Mr. Motley, the historian of the Netherlands, who, in conjunction with Mr. Fish, the foreign secretary of the United States, renewed the interrupted negotiations. As it is required by the constitution of the United States that all proposals shall be submitted to the Senate, it was thought best that the negotiations should be carried on at Washington. It was understood on both sides that an effort should be made to settle the questions on broad and general principles applicable to all future differences. The Gladstone administration was accused of being over eager to entertain the claims of the American government, and not

sufficiently earnest in pressing counter-claims raised in Canada as compensation for damage done by Fenian raiders. These censures were undeserved. It was of the utmost importance to this country not to leave unsettled claims which were sure to be pressed at the moment which would be the most inconvenient for us, and there was not a shadow of foundation for the charge made against the American government of having violated international obligations in dealing with the Fenians. Our government therefore displayed a wise moderation in abstaining from urging claims that could not be sustained, and in providing for the settlement of international disputes by arbitration. The English government greatly facilitated the conclusion of this treaty by a frank expression of regret at the escape of the *Alabama* and the other privateers, and at the ravages they committed. The commissioners on both sides agreed that the decisions of the arbitrators to be appointed under the terms of the treaty should be governed by the following rules of international duty, which the American commissioners submitted and our commissioners accepted as a fair expression of the recognised law of nations.—

“1. That a neutral government is bound, first, to use due diligence to prevent the fitting out, arming, or equipping within its jurisdiction of any vessel which it has reasonable ground to believe is intended to cruise or carry on war against a power with which it is at peace; and also to use like diligence to prevent the departure from its jurisdiction of any vessel intended to cruise or carry on a war as above, such vessel having been specially adapted, in whole or in part, within such jurisdiction to warlike use;

“2. Not to permit or suffer either belligerent to make use of its ports or waters as the base of naval operations against the other, or for the purpose of the renewal or augmentation of military supplies or arms, or the recruitment of men;

“3. To exercise due diligence in its own ports and waters, and as to all persons within its jurisdiction, to prevent any violation of the foregoing obligations and duties;

“It being a condition of this understanding that these obligations should in future be held to be binding internationally between the two countries.”

The English commissioners, in accepting these rules and agreeing that the decisions of the arbitrators should be governed by them, denied that our government had in any way failed in the performance of international duties, or had neglected to use every proper precaution to prevent the departure of the privateers; on

the contrary, they maintained that it had even gone beyond those duties by purchasing ships suspected, though without proof, to be designed to be employed in the same manner as the *Alabama*.

After the terms had been fully arranged and the treaty ratified, a difficulty arose which at one time seemed likely to prove fatal to it. The English negotiators had all along understood and believed that they had made it to be understood by the American negotiators, that the arbitrators were only to take into their consideration the actual and direct damage done by the privateers whose depredations had given rise to the treaty, but the American government set up a claim for indirect damages—that is to say, for the expense that the United States had been put to and the losses they had sustained in consequence of the failure of our government to prevent the privateers from quitting our ports. These indirect claims were made under the three following heads:—

1. The losses in the transfer of the American commercial marine to the British flag
2. The enhancement of the payment of insurances.
3. The prolongation of the war, and the addition of a large sum to the cost of it.

These claims were resisted by the English commissioners, and at length virtually waived by the American government.

When all the questions arising out of the negotiations had been satisfactorily settled, arbitrators were appointed in accordance with the stipulations of the treaty. They were—Count Frederic Sclopis, for Italy, President; Chief Justice Cockburn, for England; Mr. Charles Francis Adams, for America; M. Jaques Stacmpli, for Switzerland, and Viscount Itajuba, for Brazil. They met on the 15th, and again on the 19th of June, on which occasion they formally rejected the indirect claims. The discussions were carried on with occasional adjournments till the 25th of December, when the president delivered the following decision:—That in the case of the *Alabama* and the *Florida*, Great Britain had failed to fulfil the duties prescribed by the first and third rules of the treaty, but that in the cases of the *Retribution*, the *Sumter*, the *Nashville*, the *Tallahassee*, and the *Chickamunga*, she had not failed. The tribunal awarded 15,000,000 dollars, or about 3,000,000*l.*, in satisfaction of all claims.

The Washington treaty was again put in force this year, and the decision was again unfavourable to this country. The question of the right to the possession of the island of San Juan was referred to the arbitration of the Emperor of Germany, by whom it was awarded

to the United States. These two disputes, which a few years before would probably have led to long and bloody wars, were now decided by a judicial tribunal, whose decisions involved no humiliation of the party against which they were given.

While our diplomatic relations with the United States were thus placed on a satisfactory footing, those with France were disturbed by the approach of the time when the treaty negotiated by Mr. Cobden had been appointed to expire, leaving the governments of the two countries to renew or to modify it as they might think best after the experience they had enjoyed of its working. The French government was at this moment animated by feelings of cordial friendship towards this country. But the enormous burdens with which they were laden compelled them to make some alterations in a treaty which had been negotiated under very different circumstances. The President of the French Republic, M. Thiers, and his minister of finance, M. Pouyer Quertier, both vehement protectionists, were naturally opposed to the free-trade principles on which the treaty was based, and in the modifications which they were compelled by the situation of France to introduce into the treaty they naturally proceeded on the opinions which they held in common with the majority of their countrymen. However, great allowance was made on this side of the water for the difficulties in which the French government and nation were involved, and the proposed changes, though strongly objected to in England, produced no abatement of the cordial good understanding that subsisted between the two nations.

The close of 1872 and the commencement of 1873 were marked by strikes and rumours of strikes, arising from a general demand on the part of the working classes for increased wages and shorter hours of labour. There were strikes of agricultural labourers, masons, bricklayers, painters, plasterers, metal workers; in a word, of workers in almost every trade connected with building; threatened strikes of bakers, causing great uneasiness; and lastly, strikes of metropolitan policemen and gasmen, exciting serious alarms. Five of the ringleaders in the last-mentioned strike were indicted for a conspiracy, tried before Justice Brett, convicted, and sentenced to be imprisoned for twelve months. The severity of this punishment converted the indignation which had been felt at the conduct of these men into compassion, and great efforts were made to procure a remission of the sentence. Of all the strikes that occurred at this time the most serious was that of 10,000 colliers in Wales, which drew after it the compelled idleness of 60,000 men engaged in the

iron trade. One consequence of this strike was that the price of coals, which had been steadily increasing for many years, suddenly doubled, producing what was not incorrectly described at the time as a "coal famine." Fortunately, the winter of 1872-3 was exceptionally mild, and, therefore, the scarcity of coal was less severely felt by the poorer classes than it would have been in a more rigorous season.

On the 9th of January, 1873, the Emperor Napoleon III. terminated his chequered and eventful career at Chislehurst, whither he had retired after his release from captivity. His long residence in this country, the earnestness with which he had laboured to maintain friendly relations with the English government, the admiration with which his high-souled Empress was generally regarded, and the misfortunes which had cast so deep a cloud on his later days, all combined to produce a strong feeling of regret at his decease, and to evoke a much warmer manifestation of sympathy throughout England than was displayed in the country over which he had so long ruled.

The royal speech, delivered by commission, at the commencement of the session of 1873, announced a measure for settling the question of University education in Ireland, the formation of a Supreme Court of Judicature, including provision for the trial of appeals; proposals for facilitating the transfer of land, and for the amendment of our system of local taxation, of certain provisions of the Education Act of 1870, and of the general acts regulating railways and canals; together with various other bills for the improvement of the law.

The large Liberal majority returned at the last general election was an expression of national confidence in Messrs. Gladstone and Bright, and more especially of confidence in their ability to deal with the inveterate ills that afflicted Ireland. The government had already responded to these expectations by the disestablishment of the Irish Church, and a settlement of the Irish land question, which bids fair to be satisfactory to all classes and conditions in Ireland. It was hoped that the present parliament would crown its labours by passing a measure of University reform for Ireland, which would crown the system of religious equality which the Irish Church Bill had inaugurated. Accordingly, in the week after the opening of the parliamentary session, Mr. Gladstone introduced a bill which provided for the creation of a new Irish university, no longer identified with Trinity College, but of which that college was to form a part, together with other colleges

either already existing or hereafter to be founded. Each of these colleges was to be placed on a footing with regard to the new university similar to that on which the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge stand in reference to their respective universities, except so far as the preponderance of the Roman Catholic religion in Ireland might make it the duty of the government to introduce peculiar safeguards against the violation of the principles of religious equality and of the rights of conscience. With this view the faculty of theology was to be transferred to the disestablished Church of Ireland, and mental and moral philosophy were to be excluded from the official teaching of the new university, but voluntary examinations were to be held in these subjects. Mr. Gladstone introduced the government measure in a speech of great ability and extraordinary argumentative power, which quite carried away the House, and it seemed at first likely that the bill would command almost universal acceptance. But when it came to be more deliberately scanned, objections were raised against it from various quarters from which support had been originally expected. The Irish Roman Catholic hierarchy opposed it, because their unreasonable demands were not conceded. Many of the Irish Protestants opposed it because they thought that it gave too much to the Catholics. Mr. Fawcett had in 1872 introduced and now re-introduced a bill dealing with the question, which had the recommendation of being approved by the governing body of Trinity College. Mr. Disraeli led the opposition to the government measure, and was strongly supported by the Conservative party. Mr. Gladstone declared that the government was resolved to stake its existence on the passing of the measure. There was, therefore, a strong party struggle on the question of the second reading.

The debate was thus concluded by Mr. Gladstone.—

“To mete out justice to Ireland according to the best view that with human infirmity we could form has been the work, I will almost say the *sacred* work, of this parliament. Having put our hand to the plough, let us not turn back. Let not what we think the fault or the perverseness of those whom we are attempting to assist have the slightest effect in turning us from the path on which we have entered. As we have begun so let us go through, and with firm and resolute hand let us efface from the law and the practice of this country the last—I believe it is the last—of the religious and social grievances of Ireland.”

The House divided at two o'clock in the morning, when the numbers were—

For the second reading of the bill	...	...	...	284
Against	...	...	...	287
Majority against the government	...	...	...	3

As Mr. Gladstone had declared that the government would stand or fall by their measure, he and his colleagues at once resigned, and Mr. Disraeli was sent for by the Queen to form a new administration. Mr. Gladstone, worn down by the labours of an office which, under his conscientious discharge of its duties, was telling seriously on his health, hailed this change of administration as a welcome relief. But Mr. Disraeli, was not prepared to attempt the construction of a Conservative ministry, and therefore Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues were compelled by a feeling of loyalty to the Queen and by a sense of duty to retain office. As the Irish University Bill of the government was rejected, Mr. Fawcett's measure was reduced to a bill for the abolition of tests in the existing university, and in that shape carried.

On the same evening on which the Dublin University Bill was introduced in the House of Commons by the premier, the Judicature Bill was brought forward by Lord Chancellor Selborne in the House of Peers. It was based on the report, issued in 1869, of a commission which had been appointed to inquire into the means of effecting a complete reconstruction of our judicial system. It proposed to unite in one great tribunal all the higher courts of justice; to economize and distribute, without regard to antiquated divisions, the judicial system of the country; to put an end to the distinction between law and equity, which had been so productive of vexatious annoyance and extravagant expense, and in virtue of which suitors were bandied about from court to court without being able to obtain redress. The bill also laid a foundation for further law reforms. But while the measure made great changes in the substance of the judicial system of the country, it avoided as much as possible all changes in the form of it. The lord chief justices of the Queen's Bench and the Common Pleas, and the chief baron of the Exchequer, retained the titles and the precedence they already enjoyed, and the existing divisions of the courts over which they presided were allowed to remain as far as they did not interfere with the efficient administration of justice. But perhaps the chief merit of the bill was that it made provision for the long-demanded reform of the appellate jurisdiction nominally exercised by the House of Lords, but really by its legal members. It was proposed to transfer this jurisdiction to a tribunal composed of the lord chancellor as its

head, the chief justices, and the chief baron, the master of the rolls, and other judges, not exceeding nine in number. It was intended in the first instance that the bill should only apply to England, but as the public opinion of Scotland and Ireland was strongly pronounced in favour of the admission of those countries to a participation in its benefits, the government was quite willing to yield a claim which was in itself very reasonable. Finding, however, that this change would raise a question of privilege which might endanger the success of the measure, they abandoned for the present an improvement which, as they believed, would at no very distant time be adopted. The bill was carried through both Houses without having undergone any very important change.

The loss of time, prestige, and influence which the government suffered through the defeat of its Irish University Bill paralyzed its action during the remainder of the session. Men's minds were now turned to the general election, which would take place in 1874, and both parties were already preparing for it. The Conservatives pointed to victories won at isolated elections as proofs of a Conservative reaction; while ministers, confiding in the great measures they had already carried, and in those which they intended in due time to submit to the legislature and the country, hoped to obtain, if not a larger, at least a more compact and united band of supporters in the next parliament. The prime minister took in addition to the office of first lord of the treasury that of chancellor of the exchequer; and it was at once inferred that he was meditating another great financial operation. Mr. Bright was induced to re-enter the cabinet as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, and Messrs. Lyon Playfair and Vernon Harcourt, also took office under Mr Gladstone. These appointments were generally regarded as indicative of a contemplated change in the policy of the government, or of an attempt to transform into allies some of those whose opposition to the government had been most formidable; but the author has the best authority for affirming in the strongest manner that Mr. Gladstone was not in any degree influenced by such motives in the selection of these gentlemen, but that they were chosen simply on account of their fitness for the positions to which they were appointed, and their ability to defend the policy of the administration.

The year 1873 had been peculiarly fatal to men of eminence in almost every walk of human excellence. Philosophy suffered an irreparable loss through the death of John Stuart Mill; geology was deprived of her most eminent teacher by the decease of Professor

Sedgwick, and medicine by that of Sir H. Holland. The Church lost her brightest ornament by the accident which instantaneously took away Bishop Wilberforce, and the legal profession suffered a loss scarcely less heavy by the demise of Lord Westbury; art mourned Landseer, and literature her ennobled child, Lord Lytton.

By no part of its policy had the government established a stronger claim on the gratitude of the country than by its financial operations. When it first took charge of the finances the expenditure of the country exceeded its revenue by 513,000*l*. During its term of office the government had taken off taxes amounting to 12,000,000*l*. They had spent 10,000,000*l*. in the purchase of the telegraphs, in accordance with arrangements made by their predecessors. The Franco-Prussian war had led to an increased expenditure on the army of 2,000,000*l*.; and half the *Alabama* indemnity had been paid off without the assistance of a loan or the imposition of a tax. And yet, while these results had been obtained, there had been no lack of proper liberality on the part of the government. The army had been increased by 14,000 men; 8000*l*. had been expended in the purchase of pictures collected by the late Sir. R. Peel; and 50,000*l*. had been devoted to the acquisition of valuable antiquities for the British Museum; 26,000,000*l*. had been applied to the diminution of the national debt: yet Mr. Gladstone was able to announce, at the commencement of the year 1874, that the government had at its disposal a surplus of 5,000,000*l*, and intended to submit to parliament a plan involving a total repeal of the income tax, improved local administration, and a substantial boon to the consumer.

When that year commenced, the interest of the country was engrossed by the prosecution of a claimant to the Tichborne baronetcy and estates, rendered remarkable by the portentous impudence of the claim, the recklessness with which it was advocated, and the enormous cost and length of the trial. It was known that a general election would take place in the course of the year, but, as it was supposed to be still at least three months distant, the thought of it did not dispel the political torpor which brooded over the country. The announcement that the parliamentary session would commence on the 5th of February, and the rumour that it would be opened by the Queen in person, had no other effect than that of exciting a considerable demand for places to witness the ceremony. Suddenly the electric telegraph flashed through the country the intelligence that Mr. Gladstone and his

colleagues had recommended an immediate dissolution, that their advice had been accepted by the Queen; that Mr. Gladstone's address to the electors of Greenwich was already issued, and that in a fortnight the fate of the government would be decided. There is no reason to suppose that when the notices were issued announcing the commencement of the session on the 5th of February a dissolution was contemplated. The resolution seems to have been taken afterwards, for the purpose of ascertaining whether or not the ministry retained the confidence of the country, or whether the Conservative reaction, which seemed to be indicated by many isolated contests, would bear the test of a general election. It was felt by the government that it was necessary, without further loss of time, to put an end to a state of things which paralyzed its action and encouraged the House of Lords to reject measures on which the House of Commons had bestowed much time and labour.

Whatever may be thought of these reasons, it must be admitted that the decision based on them was advantageous to the country. It compressed into a fortnight the political agitation which would otherwise have been spread over months. It prevented much serious interruption of public and private business, greatly diminished the expenditure at the elections, saved the candidates from a prolonged uncertainty, and probably did not seriously affect the result. At all events, it did not prevent the electoral battle from being fairly fought out. No sooner was the announcement issued than the prevailing torpor was changed into the most lively effervescence. Candidates hastened to the places they hoped to represent, and the battle at once commenced. Mr. Gladstone carried his election at Greenwich, but Mr. Boord, a local distiller, headed the poll. Mr. Bright, with his two Liberal colleagues, was returned for Birmingham without opposition, and expressed his acknowledgments in a speech which showed that, notwithstanding his recent illness, he was still England's greatest orator. Mr. Forster, though repudiated by a large number of his warmest friends, was returned triumphantly at Bradford. Other members and supporters of the ministry were less fortunate. But we will not enter further into the details of the contest; suffice it to say, that the Conservative party, which before the dissolution had been in a minority of about sixty-five, could reckon in the new parliament on a compact majority of at least sixty.

How are we to explain this great Conservative victory?—how to account for this decisive defeat of a ministry which, in accordance

with the clearly expressed will of a nation, had disestablished the Irish Church, settled the Irish land question, carried a national system of education, banished from our parliamentary elections the riot, disorder, drunkenness, and corruption that had hitherto disgraced them, regulated our public-houses, dealt vigorously with the vexed and knotty question of legal reform, increased the efficiency of the military and civil service, and so ably administered the finances of the country that, after effecting repeals of taxation to the amount of 12,000,000*l.*, it could announce a surplus exceeding 5,000,000*l.*, promise to repeal the income tax, largely benefit the general consumer, and deal with the perplexed subjects of local self-government and taxation—how, I say, are we to account for the summary rejection of a government which had already done so much, and which promised to do so much more?

The answer we make to these questions is, that the merits we have enumerated were the chief cause of the defeat we have described. The progress made was too rapid, not for the interest of the country, but for the popularity and permanence of the government. Every great political change, while it benefits multitudes, injures or offends a few, whose sharp resentment is more than a match for the languid gratitude of the many who are benefited, and so the force of the reaction is proportioned to the rapidity of the progress. Multitudes who at the last election supported Mr. Gladstone because he advocated changes they desired, supported the opponents of further change. The disestablishment of the Irish Church alarmed the clergy, who feared that the Liberal party would follow it up by an assault on the English Church. Both the clergy and the Roman Catholic priesthood dreaded that the same party would substitute for the mixed system of education adopted in 1870, a national system of secular, or at least undenominational, instruction; and the Anti-State Church party was offended because this had not been already done. The economy of the government irritated many whose profits it diminished, or whose hopes it blighted. The disorganized state of the Liberal party gave a great advantage to its opponents. Most of the great questions on which its members were united were disposed of, and lesser questions were coming to the front respecting which much diversity of opinion existed among them. In parliament and out of parliament, notwithstanding the warnings and exhortations of their leader, each section of the Liberal party pressed its particular question, and would not hear of its postponement. While they were thus divided, their opponents were

thoroughly united. Deprecating change in general, they presented an unbroken front to the advocates of diverse and sometimes contradictory changes. To all these causes of defeat must be added that proverbial popular fickleness and political ingratitude which will continue until a better education shall have taught the masses to make a more conscientious and consistent use of the electoral franchise. There can be little doubt that many voted against the ministry from no other motive than an unreasoning love of change.

The elections being terminated, all that remained to be done was to decide whether ministers should at once resign or meet the new parliament. Many warm supporters of the government were anxious that Mr. Gladstone should bring forward the financial measures which he had sketched in his electioneering addresses. But the general opinion seemed to be in favour of an immediate resignation. Mr. Gladstone was especially anxious to be at once released from his honourable but laborious position. On Monday, the 16th of February, the cabinet met informally at his private residence, when he warmly recommended an immediate resignation. There was some difference of opinion, but the majority agreed with the premier that the interruption of public business which would be caused by a longer retention of office should be avoided. They therefore resolved to tender their resignations, which were accepted, and Mr. Disraeli was sent for by the Queen to form a new administration.

In no period in the history of this or any other country has the progress of the nation been so great or so manifest as in that whose history we have attempted to narrate. By the census of 1831 the population of England and Wales was 13,897,187. The enumeration of 1871 showed a population of 22,704,108. Consequently during the interval there had been an increase of 8,106,921. This increase had been tolerably steady and uniform. In the first decade it was 2,016,961; in the second, 2,013,461; in the third, 2,138,615; and in the fourth, 2,637,884. Thus, although there can be no doubt that a time must come when the population of this country will cease to increase, there is no indication at present that we are approaching the limit. But the population has not only much augmented, but it is maintained with greater ease, is far better fed, housed, clad, and educated, at the close of the period than it was at its commencement. The increase has taken place principally in the metropolis, in the great manufacturing towns of the North, in the mining districts, in the chief commercial ports,

and lastly, in places resorted to for sea-bathing, recreation, and health. At the commencement of the period embraced by this History about one person in ten received elementary education, and that in very many instances of a most imperfect character; before its close, provision had been made for the inauguration of a national system calculated to secure a sound elementary education for almost every child in the kingdom. At the commencement of this period the population was decimated by zymotic and other diseases arising from the use of unwholesome food and the neglect of sanitary precautions; at the close of it these diseases had to a great extent disappeared, because the causes that produced and propagated them had been partially removed, and in the cases which still remain they have lost much of their virulence, and are less fatal in their consequences. At the commencement of the period paupers constituted a very large part of the population of the kingdom, at its close, the proportion, though still far too large, had greatly diminished.

If it should be asked, how it has come to pass that the same country which at the end of the year 1830 was with great difficulty supporting a population of thirteen millions, should now be maintaining in comparative plenty a population of more than twenty-two millions—the answer is: That this great result has been produced by freer trade, wiser legislation, improved institutions, a better education of the people, a wider diffusion of information by means of the press, public meetings, the post office, and the electric telegraph; by the better and swifter conveyance of goods and persons; by the extraordinary extension and perfection of our mechanical processes; by the improvements that have been introduced into our agricultural operations, through which the produce of the land has been enormously increased; by the facilities that have been afforded for the profitable employment both of large and small capitals. And if it should further be asked, what is the great secret of this marvellous progress, and what the best guarantee for its continuance?—the answer is: It is to be found in the liberty that is enjoyed by every man of bringing before his fellow-citizens whatever he may deem to be for the public advantage, with a fair prospect of obtaining due consideration of the merits of his proposals.

A still stronger guarantee of the continued development of national prosperity is to be found in the more moral and religious character of our legislation, as it has become the more distinct utterance of public opinion and national will. At the commencement

of the period we have been surveying, Ireland's cry for justice was treated with insolent derision; at the close of it the maxim, "Be just, and fear not," has become the cardinal principle of our legislation; and its unflinching application, as exemplified in the Irish Land Bill, the Trades-union Bill, the Licensing Bill, the Education Bill, and many other recent measures of legislation, is the recognised panacea of our social evils, the mainspring of our wondrous progress.

That progress is calculated to inspire us with feelings of hope and confidence. Much of it has been effected amidst circumstances of passion, prejudice, and party spirit, that seemed ill adapted to produce any beneficial result; and yet our course has been one of steady, rapid, and almost unvarying improvement; confirming and illustrating the saying of the greatest of England's poets—

"There's a Divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will."

THE END.

